CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 29 February 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Ramaker (Netherlands)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 727th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Allow me at the outset to extend a very warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference, and on my own behalf, to the Secretary of State, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Ambassador Wyzner, and to the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, Mr. Michael Costello, who will address the Conference today. I should like to thank them for the interest they attach to our forum, especially at this crucial stage in our endeavours to complete the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. I am sure that their contribution to our common objective will be welcomed by the Conference.

I also have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Hungary, Pakistan, France, the Islamic Republic of Iran, New Zealand, Egypt, Sri Lanka, India, Brazil, Morocco, Indonesia, Algeria, Myanmar, Peru, Germany and South Africa. Once we have listened to the speakers on the list, I intend to invite the Conference to consider the request received from Swaziland for participation in our work as a non-member. As usual, this request has been placed in delegations' pigeon-holes. I should like now to give the floor to the Secretary of State, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Ambassador Wyzner.

Mr. WYZNER (Poland): Mr. President, I should like first to convey to you my felicitations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, a function which you add to the chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. It is good to know that at this final stage of the crucially important CTBT negotiations, the helm of the Conference as well as that of its working organ is firmly placed in the same competent and trusted hands. Of course, the fact that in the latter case it was Poland which handed over to the Netherlands the gavel of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban gives special flavour to our satisfaction. You may rest assured that in your demanding tasks you will have the full cooperation and support of the Polish delegation.

I take this opportunity to express to your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Aye of the Union of Myanmar, our appreciation for the expeditious manner in which he put under way the current session of the Conference. I would also like to add words of greetings to my old friend and a disarmament scholar of note, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the distinguished Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. I also wish to greet Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, the deputy Secretary-General of the CD, who, together with their staff, takes credit for the smooth functioning of this negotiating mechanism.

To strike a personal note - I am delighted, after a year's interval, to appear again in the CD of which I was privileged to be a part in the seventies as Poland's Permanent Representative.

It is a privilege and great pleasure to address the Conference on Disarmament at a time when - after a productive effort and remarkable progress

achieved last year - it is now seeking to bring the CTBT negotiations to a successful and timely conclusion. Next to the CW Convention, the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty - in our view - will be the most significant addition to the record of accomplishment of the CD. It will reaffirm again the vitality and the well-deserved standing of the Conference on Disarmament as a highly important single multilateral disarmament negotiating platform of global scope. Thanks to the dedicated endeavours of its members as well as observer delegations, mankind has never been closer to materializing its dream of the cessation of nuclear tests and making another momentous step towards a security system that is no longer conditioned on the sustained development and expansion of the nuclear armouries. Indeed, the nature of the present-day threats to peace and international security calls for remedies that need not necessarily rely on the ultimate weapon. Today, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, step-by-step disarmament, confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping commend themselves often as more effective instruments. Although the conflict in the former Yugoslavia represents for Europe an indelible and tragic blemish, the above-mentioned instruments have proved workable on the continent which, as a whole, has enjoyed the longest period of uninterrupted peace for centuries. It is in the context of the quest for expanding and consolidating the area of European peace, stability and cooperation that economic, political and military integration trends are so vigorously pursued by Poland, as exemplified by our determination to join NATO.

The hopefully imminent completion of the CTBT has been brought closer within our reach owing to two recent and highly auspicious events. In Poland's view, the ratification by the United States Senate, a few weeks ago, of the START II Treaty and the announcement by the President of the French Republic, exactly a month ago today, that France was terminating its nuclear tests in the South Pacific are historic events. They will both have obvious impact upon the current negotiations in the CD. The Polish Government welcomes them with great satisfaction. We also join the international community in urging the cessation of all nuclear tests everywhere as well as the ratification of START II by the Russian Federation. There can be no doubt that positive response to such appeals would add momentum to the "end-game" of the negotiations on the test-ban treaty.

Poland strongly supports the idea of completing these negotiations by the end of June 1996, so that an agreed treaty text could be ready for approval by the General Assembly of the United Nations as well as for its opening for signature before the fifty-first session of the General Assembly is inaugurated. We all need to rededicate ourselves to this objective. This schedule implies that in the short time available we must redouble our efforts and seek the common goal with an open mind, flexibility, a sense of urgency and a spirit of political good will. Now, therefore, it is no time to bring forth additional ideas that stand little chance of gaining consensus support. Having had, until recently, the privilege of bearing direct responsibility for the CTBT negotiating process, Poland feels entitled to voice such an exhortation. In our considered view, the end of the day is the time when agreed treaty language must start falling in place through mutual accommodation and a sense of realism. We wish to commend Germany and Sweden for acting in such a spirit on the issue of "preparations to test".

Poland shares the view that any linkage between CTBT and the acceptance of a specific nuclear disarmament schedule might be a complicating factor in these negotiations. Poland does not question the motives behind the insistence of some States on a specific nuclear disarmament schedule. At the same time, we cannot dismiss fears that pressing the issue might put at stake a multilateral instrument that has distinct implications not only for non-proliferation but also for broader aspirations to a world free of nuclear arms. Such a realistic and long-sought goal, which is only months away, must not be put in jeopardy. Once missed, the window of opportunity might not soon reopen. As the Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Mr. J. Holum, observed in his statement at the opening of the current session, "the answer to a world of too many nuclear weapons obviously is not a world of more nuclear explosions". We totally agree - a world of unconstrained testing and the prospect of a nuclear free-for-all would not be in the security interests of any State. Accordingly, we believe that it is both possible and necessary to seek common ground on the language of the preamble along the lines of formulas contained in documents which, in the recent past, have commanded consensus of the international community. One of such documents is the decision on "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" adopted in New York last May.

Let me now briefly address some of the major outstanding issues which the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban has to resolve in order to bring the CTBT negotiations to an early and happy conclusion. Poland is firmly convinced that the formula of the provision on scope of the treaty based on the "true-zero-yield" option is totally adequate. If offers a solution which has the distinct advantage that the ban in question would be fully internationally verifiable. A ban that does not guarantee such verifiability would not be a meaningful instrument. We, therefore, trust that the growing convergence of views on the zero-yield option will soon result in agreement on specific treaty language of the provision. We welcome in particular the near-consensus that a ban on "any nuclear-weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion" must cover so-called peaceful nuclear explosions. As we all agree, explosion of an ostensibly "peaceful" nuclear device is in no way technically different from the explosion of a nuclear weapon.

Poland is convinced that a verification system built around an international monitoring system based on four technologies will effectively deter non-compliance. It will be fully credible by assuring the detection and establishment of relevant facts about any ambiguous event. The potential of the modern technology involved, and the political improbability of attempts at non-compliance do not - in our view - justify the temptation to provide for what may prove to be an excessively elaborate, hence costly, verification mechanism.

Some other outstanding issues, if less technically complex, are certainly as politically sensitive as those of scope and verification. The provision on entry into force is among them. Here, much patient but determined work is still necessary in order to arrive at a solution that would command general support. The obvious problem, of course, is to satisfy the fundamental requirement for the universality of the treaty and its possibly early entry into effect, on the one hand, without leaving any chance for delaying entry

into effect and holding the treaty hostage, on the other hand. A task which reminds one of squaring the circle. We find worth exploring the solution suggested in that respect by Canada and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The entry-into-force formula that is predicated on ratification of the CTBT by less than all the States considered "important" from the point of view of nuclear technology might offer a middle-ground solution worth serious consideration.

Some other questions also appear to be difficult and politically sensitive, including that of the composition of, and regional representation on, the Executive Council. Without underrating the diversity of opinions in that regard, especially concerning the tenure of seats, the idea of a continuous presence in that body of some States parties should not, in our view, be improperly perceived as a status symbol. To our mind, it would rather bestow on the States parties qualifying for such a presence an added obligation and an increased responsibility for enduring effectiveness of the CTBT.

Poland welcomes the offer of the Government of Austria to host the future CTBT organization in Vienna, one of the important centres of multilateral diplomacy and United Nations-related activities. Vienna has been Poland's choice as the CTBTO seat from the outset. In our view, at a time of unprecedented financial strictures in the United Nations system and the inability, sometimes reluctance, of States Members to dig deeper into their pockets on time, cost-effectiveness of the functioning of the CTBT must be a major consideration. With the above in mind, we deem that the CTBTO should be in the first place a political body, with its own governing organs. It should, however, be free and able to subcontract some of its tasks, including those in the verification area, to a body which - like IAEA - commands extensive expertise in a related area, a highly competent staff and substantial experience. At a time of budgetary difficulties sparing no international organization, it might just not be wise to commit to paper a new international body which from inception might be doomed to financial difficulties likely to frustrate its tasks.

In our view, the pertinent lessons of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the CW Organization should be taken into account. We trust that with the growing momentum of ratifications, the CW Convention will soon enter into force. This would, hopefully, spell a happy end to the Organization's problems at The Hague headquarters. As a country which ratified the Convention quite some time ago and is now putting in place a domestic CWC implementation mechanism, we urge all CWC signatories to pursue vigorously their requisite ratification procedures. In our considered view, it would be right and proper for the entry into force of the CWC to coincide with the conclusion of the CTBT.

With the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty hopefully to become a fact of political life in a matter of months, the question poses itself - what next? On what realistic goal, or goals, should the attention of the Conference on Disarmament focus with a due sense of purpose and urgency when the CTBT issue is finally taken off the CD agenda? Should it continue to cling tenaciously to a "Decalogue" agenda, dating back to the cold-war time

and as ill-adapted to the present day realities as the composition of the CD? True, the Conference on Disarmament has set in motion a process of consultations concerning agenda priorities in the days ahead. We hope it will result in a sober reassessment of the topics that carry a promise of negotiated solutions. In our opinion, pending the outcome of the consultations, the logical first step seems pretty obvious. If the ultimate objective of a world free of nuclear arms is to be the beacon reaching out to the next century, such a step must be the resumption of efforts to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Such action would build on the ground already covered in the CD. More importantly, it would be fully consonant with the relevant General Assembly resolutions and, I should add, with the course of international events. We welcome with gratification President Jacques Chirac's decision of last Friday to stop all further production of weapons-grade fissionable materials immediately. Such a step, together with France's resolve to phase out the land-based third of her nuclear deterrent, have implications which - I am sure - will not be lost on this body. Accordingly, we believe that the Ad Hoc Committee established in 1995 should be reactivated to carry forward its purpose-oriented work, in accordance with the agreed mandate which is broad enough to respond to all concerns. Since under such a mandate all relevant issues appear negotiable, attempts to prejudge any of them in advance of the actual negotiations, or to introduce formal linkages, are not helpful. They only contribute to petrifying stalemate.

In our opinion, the Conference on Disarmament should reintroduce and take into active consideration also some of the other issues it dealt with in the recent past. It could consider, for instance, if and how the unilateral security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States - contained in Security Council resolution 984 - could represent the starting-point for discussions on broader, multilateral solutions. Likewise, nothing should stand in the way of a comprehensive reassessment of the question of transparency in armaments as well as possible further work on the improvement of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, especially its possible substantive and geographical expansion. These are areas where much useful work has already been accomplished in the CD and should not be wasted. The issue of transparency and the broader question of conventional arms in particular deserve priority consideration, in our view, even though an important body of international opinion seems to think otherwise. At a time when thousands perish from conventional arms indiscriminately used in regional conflicts, both internal and international, continued indifference to the calls of the world community for imaginative action in regard to conventional arms seems no longer acceptable. The arguments in favour of closer attention to conventional arms cannot be dismissed lightly. Estimates put world military spending today at over US$ 1,000 billion per year, with the vast bulk of the staggering sum being spent on conventional arms.

As the European experience indicates, a regional approach to conventional arms, with due regard to regional specifics and concerns, is most promising. The Conference on Disarmament, a global body by definition, has a useful role to play even in that area. Worth consideration are also possible global bans on specific conventional weapons systems which, thus far, have been dealt with

mainly in the humanitarian context. It is the case, in our view, with the problem of land-mines and other aspects of the CCW Convention. Poland is seriously concerned over the disappointingly slow progress of efforts to bring up to date the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention, especially in regard to restrictions on land-mines. The two-year-long attempts to revise the Landmine Protocol II have yielded results that fall far short of the expectations of the international community. In this light, we can well understand the critical view taken of the results of the CCW Review Conference in Vienna last year and its Geneva sequel last month. Welcome as it is, the new Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons does not satisfy our expectations for an updated CCW Convention. Although the subject-matter is not now within the purview of the Conference on Disarmament, many of its members as well as observer delegations are party to the Convention and have been actively involved in its review process. They will all appreciate, I am sure, the adverse consequences of the possible failure of the CCW review process. Poland, as indeed many other States parties to the CCW Convention, is determined to pursue generally acceptable solutions in that regard at any forum deemed appropriate. That means also the Conference on Disarmament.

While it has not been my intention to address exhaustively all the pressing issues that come within the scope of the Conference on Disarmament, I have sought to highlight those which my Government deems most pertinent. Fully sovereign and democratic Poland is determined to bring to their consideration its own constructive contribution. In seeking appropriate solutions acceptable to all we shall strive with determination and integrity to reconcile our national interests with the broader interests of the international community as a whole. This is a principle which guides my country also in the United Nations Security Council, where Poland has just assumed its seat as a non-permanent member.

In concluding let me add that Poland welcomes with appreciation all past and future contributions to the negotiating process in the form of model treaty texts. While focusing attention of the negotiators on the problems areas and on possible solutions, such texts demonstrate that given a spirit of mutual accommodation, consensus is possible and that a CTBT is within reach of this body. I am confident that it will soon come to its successful completion.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary of State, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, Mr. Michael Costello.

Mr. COSTELLO (Australia): Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you personally on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You carry indeed a heavy burden of responsibilities given also your continuing chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee negotiating the nuclear-test-ban treaty. On behalf of the Australian Government, I would like to thank you, your delegation and the Government of the Netherlands for the commitment and sense of purpose and destination you have brought to meeting the tasks facing the Conference and its Ad Hoc Committee.

Let me also express my appreciation for the statement just made by the Secretary of State and First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. It was an extremely thoughtful outline of the future agenda for this Conference and I agree entirely with the sentiments he expressed of the urgency of the task before us for a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

I have not made this special trip from Australia to talk to you in generalities about challenges and problems. Rather I have come in an effort to contribute to your deliberations on a nuclear test ban in a practical and helpful way. First, I wish to communicate a sense of urgency; the sense of urgency that is felt in communities around the world; the sense of urgency, driven by overall security concerns, that has influenced our Governments and created the opportunity we now have to conclude, once and for all, a comprehensive test-ban treaty. This is our first real opportunity in 40 years to conclude such a ban. Around us, however, the world is changing. It does not wait for multilateral processes to inch forward in their own good time. The opportunity before the Conference can be - is - diminished with every delay.

We are all agreed that now is the time to complete the CTBT negotiations. Yet I think that you and your colleagues around this table will also admit to a sense of concern - concern that negotiations are still caught in what the Sri Lankan Ambassador so correctly described earlier this year as a Gordian knot. A knot of a thousand brackets and a few tough issues could throttle these negotiations even with the best of political intentions. It is this sense of urgency and concern which is the origin of Australia's effort to make a further substantial and practical contribution at this stage of the negotiations.

We know why it is hard, substantively, to conclude a CTBT. It represents a major step forward, which will consolidate international non-proliferation norms and, importantly also, bring substantial disarmament benefits. A ban on testing will block the emergence of new generations of nuclear weapons. It will bind the capabilities of the nuclear-weapon States and stop competition for qualitative improvement between them. To prevaricate is to undermine a genuine step forward in the process of eliminating nuclear weapons. The international community demonstrated its strong commitment at the United Nations General Assembly last year to concluding the negotiations and having the treaty ready for signature by the outset of the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 1996.

It is Australia's view that to meet that expectation the treaty text must be finalized by the end of the second part of the CD session on 28 June. Outside of Geneva, amongst Governments and communities, there is a strong expectation that this goal will be reached. But more than that, I can tell you that there is a feeling that after decades of living under the shadow of nuclear escalation, we are owed a legally binding, global agreement to end testing. The delivery of that strong expectation is your challenge as delegates to the Conference on Disarmament.

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Mr. President, much has been achieved under the leadership and guidance of your chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee and under that of your predecessors, Ambassador Dembinski and Ambassador Marín Bosch. Tribute is also due in full measure to those Chairs of Working Groups and Friends of the Chair over the last two years or so whose work has contributed to the present advanced state of the negotiations. When we consider how far the rolling text has progressed in these two years, how far we have all moved in terms of our understanding and convergence of ideas since the invaluable input of the initial Swedish texts, the advance has indeed been notable.

Hard work over the last two years has taken us a good 90 per cent of the way and given us almost all of the text we need. Yet concern is widespread in Geneva and in capitals that the opportunity to complete and sign a treaty this year is slipping away. To manage the decision-making and production of the final 10 per cent of text on schedule, we will need new momentum. The negotiations have reached a critical point. Australia believes, and hopes, it will assist the negotiations both psychologically and in a practical way to demonstrate, tangibly, that a CTBT along the lines we have been negotiating here for two years is indeed within reach. It is for these reasons that Australia is today tabling a complete model text of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Let me first explain what our text is not. Australia is not seeking to establish an alternative or parallel negotiating process to that which you in Geneva had pursued in the Ad Hoc Committee and which has achieved much. Nor does our text seek to be considered an alternative to, or substitute for, the achievements which the rolling text represents. Our production of a model text was begun as an exercise for ourselves. It was designed to test among Australian officials the validity of a claim that a treaty text, which we want very much for our own national security reasons, as well as for other broader reasons, was indeed within our grasp this year. A great deal of effort went into this exercise, and I should acknowledge here the skill and stamina of my own team. Australian officials have also held detailed discussions with many countries and, as far as possible, we have integrated the results into this initiative. In considering this effort, we have been encouraged to proceed by the informal urging of delegations from all CD groupings to bring our ideas to the table.

We believe that the results prove that a treaty really is within the world's grasp. If negotiating States are able to make some relatively small leaps of imagination and grapple in a spirit of compromise with the remaining unresolved issues, then we can indeed have an instrument this year which will materially and significantly contribute to the security of us all.

So, our text is offered as a model demonstrating that we already have a basis on which the negotiations can be successful in the few months remaining. A great deal of our text should be very familiar to negotiators. Your achievements are all present in our work. The great bulk of our text has been lifted from the rolling text with great care, to preserve the logical continuity of the negotiations. The balance represents our response to issues where either the lines of convergence are unclear or the available rolling text materials is slender. Here our text advances a model for the kind of

compromises which it will be necessary for all parties to make if agreement is to be reached. Yet, here too, our drafting emphasizes continuity with the negotiations. It pursues faithfully the lines already mapped out and agreed by delegations to the Conference. It offers solutions to outstanding problems, but these are not necessarily preferred Australian outcomes. We have striven to choose the middle path and accept compromise, and chose a middle path on which we believe consensus can be achieved.

To assist negotiators, and to maximize its usefulness as a resource, our model text is accompanied by explanatory notes. These give a clear picture of how we have gone about our work.

I would like to address a few important specific areas to illustrate the way we have gone about drawing together opposing positions into what we believe could be mutually acceptable language.

On scope - the most fundamental provision of the treaty - our proposed text will be familiar. It was first tabled in March 1995 as document CD/NTB/WP.222, and since then has attracted widespread support. We believe this text continues to represent the most straightforward, streamlined means of establishing a truly comprehensive ban on nuclear explosions.

On verification we have incorporated the text already available for describing the four international monitoring system technologies on which consensus has been achieved (seismic, hydroacoustic, radionuclide and infrasound), and on associated institutional arrangements. We have suggested a middle-way solution to the debates surrounding the nature of verification reports and the inclusion of noble gas monitoring capability.

For on-site inspection (OSI) we have carefully and deliberately reflected both the substance and the structure of the rolling text. We have selected from the various options available there to produce an overall package which we consider contains the internal political and technical balances which are required for the OSI mechanism to be technically credible and politically acceptable. Bearing in mind the need to strike a balance between timeliness, the need to enable the detection of time-critical phenomena, and the need to protect against frivolous or abusive requests for an inspection, the approach we settled on is centred around a "red-light" decision-making process if a request is based on IMS data and a "green-light" process if the request is based solely on non-IMS data. It incorporates a two-phase approach to OSI - a short, less intrusive phase and, if deemed necessary, an extended phase when more intrusive activities would be undertaken.

With regard to entry into force, we have tried to take into account the major concerns of negotiating parties. These include the requirement for all "key" States to ratify the treaty before it enters into force and a need to prevent entry into force being blocked by a delay in ratification by any individual State. We have tried to find a formula that will ensure that the number of States parties at entry into force is adequate to enable effective financing of the CTBTO and that the number and composition of States parties is adequate to enable the effective implementation of the international monitoring system. In order to accommodate these concerns, we have proposed a

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slight variation to the current waiver proposal. I would note that this is one area in which our proposed text differs considerably from our national preference, and represents an acceptable compromise for us; our preference remains for a simple numerical formula.

Resolving the matter of Executive Council composition will clearly require flexibility on all our parts. Between us, we already have reached a consensus on the requirement that the Executive Council be an inclusive body, with a structure which allows a reasonable amount of discretion to regional groups in determining designation of seats, at the same time setting relatively objective criteria for appointment to continuous and other seats. The mechanism we propose attempts to give form to the consensus we already have on those principles.

We are not presuming through our model text to dictate outcomes. Our text is a package based on some very solid foundations, but it is not offered as some final package with which we ask delegations to either agree or disagree. Achievement of solutions and a final package is the role for the continuing negotiations. We do intend, however, that our text assist you, as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, in refocusing the negotiations, and giving an upward shift in their style and pace. We urge all negotiating parties to join us in calling for the negotiating process to enter a decisive final phase our model text demonstrates the feasibility of such a shift, and we hope it will help generate the necessary intensification of our collective effort. The outcome of these negotiations cannot be held hostage either to the choices we must now make or to the slim volume of additional text which remains to be negotiated. In these circumstances, the leaders of our negotiations bear a heavy responsibility. We look to you to show strong leadership, indeed to take inspired risks, in bringing delegations to recognizing the potential for solutions. In this task you have a right to expect in return real commitment and genuine flexibility from delegations. We are encouraged to see that other delegations also feel the need for a new impetus, and we thus welcomed the contribution of the Iranian draft treaty text introduced by Foreign Minister Velayati last week.

I know that some delegations have wondered what the Australian stake is in this. That is easy to explain. We have a long-standing commitment to a permanent end to nuclear testing, both regionally and globally. We are also committed to a world without nuclear weapons. This is clearly demonstrated by the broad pattern of our efforts which are not confined to the CTBT negotiations.

I would refer you to the recent initiative of our Prime Minister for the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and I quote the Australian Foreign Minister when he said:

> "Indeed it is because we feel so strongly that the larger goal of elimination had to be addressed - rather than limiting ourselves to arguing for steps like the CTBT and the NPT - that we embarked upon the enterprise of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons announced by the Prime Minister. Its tasks are essentially twofold: to make a compelling intellectual case for the desirability of

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elimination not merely on moral grounds but on security and strategic grounds, and to provide practical and serious ideas about how elimination can be achieved."

I have never been a supporter of the view that anything in global affairs is inevitable, that any process achieves a momentum that is unstoppable. Specifically, I do not believe that we can assume that a CTBT is going to happen, if not this year, then next year or the year after, or the year after that. I suspect that if it had been suggested to those engaged in the search for a CTBT in the 1960s that 30 years later there would still be no agreement, that suggestion would have been ridiculed. After all, the Partial Test-Ban Treaty being concluded in the early 1960s, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty later that decade, and the area of detente - remember detente? - between the Soviet Union and the United States had been proclaimed. Well, we are 30 years on and there is still no agreement. It is true that in the post-cold-war environment, many things are possible that previously were simply not possible. But, because something becomes a possibility, does not mean that it becomes an inevitability. We still have to make it happen. We know, after all, how quickly times can change. We know how dramatically unpredictable the affairs of humankind are. For example, I wonder how many international affairs analysts and professional diplomats can lay their hands over their hearts and say with honesty that in 1980 they foresaw the utter transformation of the central security balance over the next 10 years. And I might say that the rare individual who in 1980 had made such a forecast would have been dismissed out of hand. What I am saying comes down to this: the hard work of the last two or three years by you in this Conference has fully analyzed and outlined the technical, legal, security and political issues on which decisions need to be made if a CTBT is to be concluded. In addition, the international and domestic political forces this year are all favourably disposed towards making those decisions. But, my friends, this widespread favourable disposition is not yet guaranteed to last. We need to take advantage of it while it is there, to lock in for all time, under international law, a ban on all nuclear testing. So, we say that we cannot afford to delay. We must seize the hour. We must seize the hour and make those hard decisions that are so clearly before us. We must seize the hour, for if we do not, it may not come our way again. We hope our draft text and explanatory notes will make a real contribution to this urgent task.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Náray.

Mr. NARAY (Hungary): Mr. President, first of all let me congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of this Conference. We are certainly confident that your well-known diplomatic qualities and experience will guarantee efficient leadership of our negotiations in the coming weeks. The excellent way in which you started discharging your duties as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Text Ban is the best proof in this regard. We wish you the greatest success in both your capacities and assure you that my delegation supports you in your activities and we offer our cooperation. I

also would like to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador U Aye of Myanmar, who guided us in such an outstanding manner through the crucial first month of the annual session.

It is a particular privilege for me to take the floor after two distinguished visitors, from Poland and Australia. We have listened with great interest to their comprehensive statements and I would like to thank them for their important contribution.

This year the Conference on Disarmament faces especially important challenges. Negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test ban are entering their final phase, bringing this decades-long aspiration of the international community within reach. The international environment provides us with a propitious moment for coming to grips with this objective. In this respect we highly commend the unilateral moratoria and other national measures related to the cessation of nuclear testing by four nuclear-weapon States. Hungary fully shares the view that this opportunity should be seized and the Conference should spare no efforts to conclude the work on a CTBT by June 1996, allowing its signature at the beginning of the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly. The early resumption of the nuclear-test-ban negotiations this year created the necessary momentum for a successful outcome within this period of time. It is gratifying to note that work has significantly advanced and, as a matter of fact, final agreement is close at hand on issues like national implementation measures, possible relationship with IAEA, the seat of the organization, just to mention the most obvious ones. This delegation strongly hopes that this positive trend will be upheld or even reinforced.

While negotiations are heading in the right direction, all of us are well aware of a number of basic matters to be solved. Even after more than two years of intensive negotiations those issues continue to present major stumbling-blocks. For progress to take place with regard to the "rolling text" as a whole, it would be essential to reach timely agreement on such components of the CTBT as scope, on-site inspections, composition and powers of the Executive Council and entry into force. The organizational framework set up by the Chairman of the NTB Ad Hoc Committee fully reflects this understanding of the priorities and helps to focus the negotiations at this stage on the most complex and sensitive issues. It is reassuring to know that in addressing them the Conference can rely on the diplomatic skills and vast experience of Ambassador Berdennikov and Ambassador Zahran as Chairmen of the two Working Groups and Ambassador Moher as Friend of the Chair for OSI as well as Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi, Friend of the Chair for the composition of the Executive Council.

The issue of the scope is at the heart of the treaty. Should it be resolved as early as possible, a great deal would have been accomplished and further negotiations on other aspects of the CTBT should prove fruitful in a shorter time-frame. The decisions of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to subscribe to the "true zero" option, a position later on also endorsed by the Russian Federation, bodes well for this. Hungary continues to believe that this concept is aptly translated into treaty language by the draft article on the scope of prohibition submitted by Australia. We strongly

oppose the weakening of the basic obligations through the introduction of the notion of peaceful nuclear explosions into the treaty text. Arguments in favour of the utility of such experiments are far from being convincing while at the same time they have the potential of providing significant military information. The creation of such a loophole would undermine the credibility of the comprehensive nuclear test ban.

Further meaningful steps are needed to bring closer many of the divergent viewpoints with respect to on-site inspections as well. Technical issues surrounding on-site inspections (OSI) should be based on the requirements of efficiency, reliability of data collection and cost-effectiveness. Only such a regime can provide viable deterrence to would-be violators and create the necessary atmosphere of mutual confidence among the States parties. In order to ensure this we are for a decision-making process tailored to the specific needs of a CTBT verification regime permitting timely access to the location of the suspicious event. It is difficult to imagine that information derived from sources other than the international monitoring system (IMS) and related to the subject-matter of the treaty will be ignored. For our delegation the question to be solved is rather how the evidence gained by national technical means can be integrated into the decision-making process and what weight should be given to them with a view to being consistent with the non-discriminatory character of the treaty and the predominant role of the IMS. The propositions in this context made by France and recently by South Africa may offer possible solutions and thus deserve further consideration.

Hungary's position on entry into force is that a simple numerical formula combined with diplomatic efforts could be instrumental in ensuring the adherence of all relevant countries whose absence would render the treaty meaningless. The consultations of the Powers concerned might be formalized by a Waiver Conference. The goals and purposes of the CTBT can be best promoted and implemented by an independent organization in close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Vienna as the seat of the CTBTO has been a long-standing preference of my Government. Through such an arrangement Hungary attaches high importance to finding the most cost-effective way of operating the verification regime. The ongoing work under the guidance of the Friend of the Chair for funding should reveal the possible sources of economy arising from co-location and parallel activities with IAEA. The budget of the organization should cover only activities which are clearly identified and agreed upon in the treaty and the protocols.

We consider the emerging international norm banning nuclear-test explosions indefinitely as a landmark achievement on the road toward the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. Hungary, as a small non-nuclear-weapon State, strongly advocates the conclusion of further treaties on nuclear arms control and disarmament. We do not think, however, that setting a concrete timetable for this is a feasible approach. Insisting on a time-bound framework, here and now, is likely to result in aborting the promising prospects for early conclusion of the CTBT. The successful outcome of the negotiations, however, would create a favourable international climate for promoting the noble goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and would send a message to the nuclear-weapon States encouraging them to pursue in good faith negotiations on further effective measures in this field.

(Mr. Náray, Hungary)

The Hungarian delegation shares the sense of urgency becoming more and more apparent around this table. The long and arduous process of negotiations should bear fruit this time. New initiatives focusing attention on the most critical outstanding issues and proposing feasible compromise solutions certainly lend new impetus to our deliberations. We commend the efforts of Australia and the submission of their model treaty text. We are confident that, along with similar working documents, it will facilitate early agreement on a CTBT, which cannot any more remain an elusive goal.

Measures to outlaw nuclear-weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions will inherently contribute to the promotion of broader and more far-reaching goals. Substantive debate has been taking place since the opening of the annual session of the Conference on Disarmament on the role of bilateral and multilateral measures in this process. Divergent views have been articulated on how this body can best address nuclear-related issues. The efforts of the outgoing President were most useful and we would like to encourage the incumbent office-holder to continue his consultations with a view to finding a consensus solution to the problem. In our view the decisions of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties of the near-universal Non-Proliferation Treaty identify the short-term programme for global non-proliferation and disarmament negotiations. We accordingly urge the Conference to re-establish its Ad Hoc Committee on "cut-off" and start the work on the basis of the carefully worded mandate in the report of Ambassador Shannon. A global, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear explosive devices will be an essential component in the programme for prevention of the further spread of nuclear weapons.

We also believe that, at the present stage, due to the political, legal and technical complexities involved, measures to reverse the consequences of the nuclear arms race can be most effectively negotiated and implemented in the context of bilateral efforts. We have noted with great satisfaction the ratification of the START II Treaty by the Senate of the United States and are hopeful that the Russian Duma will soon follow suit. These steps will undoubtedly pave the way for further deep cuts in the nuclear arsenals of these two countries.

The Conference on Disarmament has won credit by negotiating several major treaties in the field of weapons of mass destruction. The profound transformation in recent years of the challenges to international peace and security has, however, put into limelight the issue of conventional weapons as well. Hungary continues to stress the importance of finding an appropriate place for this issue in the CD's working programme. Under its agenda item on transparency in armaments, this body is most suited to elaborate measures to strengthen and enlarge the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The lack of action by the Conference in this context is in sharp contrast with the ever-growing role of regional arrangements and agreements. Hungary welcomes the fact that the arms control process has become an integral part of the peace settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The negotiations in the OSCE framework have already brought about an agreement on confidence-building measures. This in its turn should prepare the groundwork for a CFE-like arms limitation treaty before the withdrawal of IFOR. These measures are high on

the list of my Government's disarmament priorities because effective control of the massive arms stockpiles on the territory of the former Yugoslavia would also serve as a prerequisite for smooth implementation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The Conference will certainly be able to draw on this experience of conventional arms control within the framework of international efforts to implement a peace treaty.

The tasks ahead of us clearly require adequate representation of the international community in our work. The significant expansion of the membership of the Conference cannot be postponed any more, without running the risk of undermining its credibility. We are hopeful that circumstances will permit the implementation of the decision contained in document CD/1356 before the conclusion of the CTBT negotiations giving special weight to this legal instrument.

Let me conclude my statement by announcing a recent decision of the Government of Hungary related to one of the most lethal types of conventional weapon, which reflects our support for the multilateral initiatives to reduce the suffering of the victims of the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel land-mines. In order to contribute to the elimination of this immense threat, especially to the civilian population, my Government adopted decree No. 1124/1995 declaring a moratorium on the export and re-export of all types of anti-personnel land-mines. This measure should be regarded as a continuation and legal underpinning of a de facto moratorium because Hungary ceased to manufacture and export land-mines more than two decades ago. It is our expectation that the last phase of the Review Conference of the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will result in a comprehensive strengthening of this major instrument of international humanitarian law by setting up new and more effective norms for the use and transfer of land-mines.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Hungary for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Mr. President, you are destined to play a central role in writing an important chapter in the history of Disarmament. You have assumed the presidency of the Conference at a time when we have begun to discuss the final shape of a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT). It is happenstance that you serve concurrently as the very able and active Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. The burdens which rest on your shoulders are heavy. But your shoulders are wide. We are confident that you are more than equal to the challenges of your twin offices.

As President, you follow in the footsteps of our friend, Ambassador U Aye of Myanmar. It is difficult to act to follow. During Ambassador Aye's tenure as President, the CD achieved a rare consensus - and I do not mean the one to establish the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, but the one relating to Ambassador Aye's sincere commitment to the success of our common goal, on his firm resolve to advance our work, amiably and with his characteristic charm, humour and dignity. May I also take this opportunity to fulfil the pleasant duty to welcome all our new colleagues in the Conference on Disarmament? They

have joined us in time to make crucial decisions for global disarmament. I also wish to express our appreciation for the participation in our deliberations last week by Foreign Minister Velayati of the Islamic Republic of Iran and, today, by Deputy Foreign Minister Wyzner of Poland, a seasoned disarmer, and by Secretary Costello of Australia.

For over 30 years, people of good will all over the world have asked for the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We are now in sight of this goal. Although late, it is better than never. A CTBT has been consistently viewed by the world community as an essential element in the endeavour to promote nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In these final stages of our negotiations, it is vital that we ensure that the CTBT should fulfil both these complementary objectives. We have heard interesting statements at our recent meetings about the relationship between the CTBT and nuclear disarmament. Some wish to make one dependent on the other. Others believe that the CD should only negotiate a CTBT and later a fissile materials ban and leave nuclear disarmament to the nuclear-weapon States.

I do not wish today to enter into this debate. Our self-restraint is motivated by the desire to preserve the positive political atmosphere which is essential for the success of the CTBT negotiations in the shortest possible time. But the CTBT will not be the "end of history" for the CD, but the beginning. We shall return, very soon, to the issue of nuclear disarmament and the role which the Conference on Disarmament can and must play in this to fulfil the aspirations of the international community and create the pre-conditions for peace and security in the twenty-first century.

The CTBT text presented last week to the CD by Foreign Minister Velayati of Iran illustrated that we are close to the point where a specific test-ban treaty can be envisioned. This impression is confirmed by the "model treaty" presented today by Mr. Costello, Permanent Secretary of the Australian Foreign Ministry. We welcome both the Iranian and the Australian initiatives. Both these texts could be a useful contribution to the process of negotiating agreed compromise language on various elements of the CTBT. Our eyes must, however, remain focused on addressing the major outstanding political issues and thus evolving a sound and credible CTBT - a CTBT which will inspire the support not only of all States but also of common people all over the world who have waited patiently for this disarmament measure over long decades and through thousands of nuclear tests.

All of us, I believe, agree that the CTBT must comprehensively ban all nuclear-test explosions. The Australian text on the scope of the CTBT is simple and straightforward. However, this text has not entirely set at rest the fear that some forms of nuclear-test explosions could be construed as being outside the purview of the test ban and enable the nuclear-weapon States to continue the qualitative development of their weapons. We have all welcomed the position adopted last August by France and the United States, and later by the United Kingdom, subscribing to a "zero yield" CTBT. China has supported specific language to ban all tests which "release" nuclear energy. Some other proposals go further in seeking a prohibition of all tests, even if these do not qualify as "explosions". My delegation considers it essential to

ensure that the treaty language which we agree on comprehensively and completely prohibits all nuclear-test explosions which can contribute to the qualitative development of nuclear weapons. We are given to understand that a "zero-yield" or "no-yield" ban could serve to halt such qualitative development of nuclear weapons. This "understanding" should be appropriately incorporated in the treaty itself. Suitable language should be formulated for this purpose.

The Pakistan delegation took special note of the statement made here on 20 January by Mr. Holum, Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, that a test ban would serve to halt "a broad array of new weapons developments". Among these, he mentioned "nuclear directed-energy weapons", the "nuclear-explosion-pumped X-ray laser", "enhanced electromagnetic pulse weapons", "microwave weapons" and "enhanced-radiation weapons". These assurances are directly related to the scope of the CTBT. They should also be appropriately reflected in the text of the treaty. The CTBT should, moreover, clarify that the development of such new and exotic nuclear weapons system will be completely prohibited following the conclusion of a comprehensive text-ban treaty.

A nuclear test-ban treaty must not only be comprehensive, it must also be effectively verifiable. However, given the capabilities of at least some of the nuclear Powers to conduct extremely low-yield tests, we shall have to rely considerably on their good faith and responsibility in observing the letter and spirit of a comprehensive test ban. Within the limitations imposed by technology, we have now before us proposals for the creation of a feasible and fairly credible international monitoring system. This international monitoring system will provide equal access to its data and information to all States. We remain open to suggestions to strengthen the IMS by the provision of data by member States in a transparent and equitable manner. However, there will be no consensus on the legitimacy of non-IMS data or information which could be used by only a few States on an arbitrary basis. And, any proposal which seeks to legitimize clandestine and covertly gathered information - information and practices which could be used for purposes that are beyond the requirements of a CTBT or unrelated to it - would be totally unacceptable.

There is general agreement that on-site inspections (OSI) should be rare and be invoked only as a last resort to resolve questions of compliance. This principle, which we fully endorse, can be guaranteed if an OSI is activated only by events that are detected by the IMS and subjected to an approval procedure by the Executive Council. The use of national technical means, which only a few possess and even fewer understand, would leave open the possibility that an OSI can be abused for purposes other than verification of a CTBT. The potential for abusive OSI cannot be ruled out when the source of the evidence is dubious and the responsible body in the CTBT organization is excluded from the consideration of an OSI request. Therefore, we cannot support, either as a supplement to the IMS or as a parallel mechanism for verification, those so-called NTMs which are not made a part of the international monitoring network.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

For the conduct of an OSI, we envisage a sequence which must involve detection of an ambiguous event by the IMS, a necessary process of consultation and clarification which, if unsuccessful, should enable the Executive Council to consider a request for OSI. A decision to conduct an OSI must be taken by a two-thirds majority. Even as regards "time-critical" evidence, appropriate procedures can be devised to cater to the genuine requirement that the Executive Council act with alacrity once a reasonable case is presented based on the verification network which is owned and operated by the international community.

The Pakistan delegation is satisfied with the important work accomplished in the context of the international data centre. This is another area where further consultations and deliberations are required to evolve agreement.

In the politically charged atmosphere which, unfortunately, surrounds the CTBT negotiations, rumours are rife regarding the real positions of various States. Yet, even in this hall of "trick mirrors", we must be clear about some fundamental realities. The CTBT must be comprehensive not only in prohibiting all nuclear tests; it must also be comprehensive in securing a commitment against testing from all States which are capable of testing. To be sanguine about some of these States remaining outside the treaty is to invite the collapse of the treaty. A CTBT is an "all or nothing" treaty. It cannot be "partial" in any way. Pakistan will insist that, for the CTBT to come into force, it must have the adherence of all the nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-capable States.

Pakistan wants a good treaty - one which will attract universal adherence. We wish to conclude this treaty as soon as possible. We believe that the drafting of the treaty text is not the difficult part. What stands in the way of a CTBT now are the crucial political decisions which some important participants in these talks must take. The choice we face is a nuclear or non-nuclear future for our world. The choice is clear.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of France, Ambassador Bourgois.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all allow me to congratulate you on the breadth of vision, dynamic approach and flexibility which you have displayed since you took the Chair of the Conference at a crucial stage in our negotiations. I am delighted that this Conference allows participants to hold two positions at once - a matter of much controversy in our democracies - because this phenomenon also offers me the opportunity to congratulate you on the ease with which you are carrying out this twofold task, this task of President of the Conference and the fundamental one of Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the nuclear-test-ban treaty. You may rely on the complete readiness of my country and my delegation to do all that we possibly can to help you, if necessary, to carry us all together towards success. I would at the same time like to pay tribute to your predecessors, and more especially the most recent of them, the Ambassador of Myanmar, whose skill made it possible for us to take up our work again without delay.

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

On 11 May 1995, together with more than 170 other signatory countries of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, France renewed its commitment to work towards the international community's ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament in the context of general and complete disarmament. In keeping with the resolutions adopted by consensus on this subject by the United Nations General Assembly, we have first directed our efforts towards the speedy conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Such a treaty would serve both the cause of nuclear disarmament and that of non-proliferation, which is indissolubly linked to it. This is the task which brings us together today. In this context, France welcomes the initiative that Australia, following Iran, has taken today in submitting a draft treaty whose serious and ambitious nature impressed us in the presentation kindly provided by that country's representative. My authorities will be carefully studying these contributions. They respond to the expectations, indeed the impatience, of the international community. By proposing complete and consistent solutions, they show that the goal of concluding the treaty this summer, so as to sign it in the autumn, is not beyond our reach.

Above and beyond the significant stakes involved in the nuclear-test-ban treaty, voices have been raised calling on the five nuclear-weapon States, which in that capacity bear special responsibilities, to go further. That is what my country has now done, through the President of the Republic's, announcement on 22 February of a series of measures which I will take the liberty of enumerating. The President of the Republic first of all drew the consequences of our decision to put an end to our nuclear tests and to accede to the protocols to the Treaty of Raratonga, signature of which will take place at the end of March. He announced the closing down of the Pacific nuclear testing sites in Mururoa and Fangataufa. In closing down its testing site, France, as a nuclear Power, is making an exceptional gesture. This gesture testifies to its continuing desire to do all that it can to promote success in the undertaking on which we have embarked. This gesture also points to its confidence in the possibility of success. I am sure that you all appreciate what such a decision means in concrete terms, but also as a symbol.

Going beyond the nuclear-test-ban treaty, the May 1995 declaration on principles and objectives assigns the Conference on Disarmament a second objective which, in the ranking of priorities, comes immediately after it. I refer to the conclusion of a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for military purposes, what is known as the "cut-off" treaty. France, which had earlier halted the production of plutonium for military purposes, decided on 22 February to close down the Pierrelatte high-enrichment plant which was still capable of producing highly enriched uranium for national defence purposes. Under this decision, France is therefore unilaterally halting the production of fissile material for the manufacture of weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Allow me to express the hope that the international community will recognize that this is a signal showing the direction in which we must now direct our efforts without delay. In any event that is my country's ambition.

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

Lastly, the French head of State announced new unilateral cuts in our nuclear arsenal: quantitative reductions as a result of the closure of the Plateau d'Albion and the dismantling of the 30 Hades missiles which had been mothballed; structural reductions too, because under this decision, France has abandoned the present land-based component of its deterrent, as well as the short-range missiles it possesses. These reductions fit into the framework of our doctrine of deterrence based on the concept of strict sufficiency. The results of the last series of nuclear tests, as well as the change in the international climate, made this change possible. I would like to express the hope that these new decisions, like those taken earlier by other partners, will help to enhance the necessary trust between our States, our nations, our peoples, so that they can show that they are able to act together to promote peace.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of France for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Nasseri.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am not taking the floor today to present a statement but merely to make a brief intervention in which, for my part, I wish to express a warm welcome to Ambassador Wyzner, Secretary of State, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, and Mr. Micheal Costello, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, to the Conference on Disarmament. Their presence here and their contributions today are highly valued by our delegation. I further wish to express my appreciation and gratitude for the commitment that Australia has once again demonstrated to advancing the cause of disarmament in different areas and to the specific initiative presented today on the comprehensive test-ban treaty. I believe the near-coincidence of the two initiatives by Iran and Australia, independent as they have been, proves further that the necessary elements for a treaty banning comprehensively nuclear tests is possible and it is political decisions that are required for its finalization at this stage.

International treaties are usually bound to pass through three rather distinct phases before they are completed. This has particularly been the case at the Conference on Disarmament. The first phase is normally devoted to identification of issues that the negotiating States believe should be included in the purview of the treaty. For the CTBT, we passed this phase at the end of 1993 and early 1994 under the chairmanship of Ambassador Tanaka. In the second phase, the negotiating States would engage in deliberations on various aspects of the treaty and examine the details of each issue. This process normally evolves into a rolling text. For the CTBT, introduction of the rolling text by Ambassador Marín Bosch marked a crucial point in the negotiations and the Conference, I believe, remains indebted to him for this timely and important contribution. The third phase is when negotiations are conducted in order to finalize the text of the treaty. Here, I refer to negotiations in their real sense and actual process of give and take. This is the most critical phase in the process of the formulation of the treaty. I believe we have passed through and completed the first and second phases but I cannot say with any level of certainty that we have entered this third phase as yet. What we and, I believe, Australia have done is to facilitate an entry

(Mr. Nasseri, Islamic Republic of Iran)

into this phase. This is a juncture when negotiations would presumably attempt to project a picture of a possible final compromise from their own perspective and position. The two initiatives by Iran and Australia present possible compromise texts that would take into account, hopefully in a balanced form, various positions that our interlocutors have presented so far. An estimated 10 weeks remain for the finalization of negotiations. The CTBT will not be concluded unless we engage very soon in a final phase of negotiations aimed at throwing up the eventual form of the treaty. If our initiatives serve only to start the give-and-take process and to encourage the negotiators to deepen the level of negotiations, I believe they have served their purpose.

Fortunately, we are all aware of the important responsibility that is entrusted to us. Conclusion of the CTBT is the strong desire of the entire international community. It was one of the principal decisions made at the NPT Review and Extension Conference in New York. We wish to help ensure that that decision is, indeed, materialized. This will be followed by the commencement of negotiations on a "cut-off" treaty. The basis for agreement to establish an ad hoc committee for this purpose already exists. We should at the same time sharpen our focus on the process of nuclear arms reduction through to their final elimination. The role of the Conference on Disarmament here is essential. I hope that we can soon establish the Ad Hoc Committee to begin comprehensive discussions and negotiations aimed at elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework here in the CD.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Armstrong.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (New Zealand): I offer you, Mr. President, New Zealand's warmest congratulations on two counts. First, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and second, on your election as Chairman of the CTBT negotiations. Both positions carry with them a heavy responsibility at a time when the international community is waiting upon news of progress towards the conclusion of a long-sought-after treaty. We offer you our fullest cooperation and support in your endeavours. I also take this opportunity to offer our thanks to your two predecessors, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco, and Ambassador U Aye of Myanmar, who worked energetically to ensure a rapid resumption of the negotiations in the Conference this year.

The CTBT negotiations have been conducted so far this year against a backdrop of intense debate about commitments to nuclear disarmament. It is not an exaggeration to say that the continuation by China and resumption by France of nuclear testing in the immediate aftermath of the NPT's Review and Extension Conference last May challenged the confidence of non-nuclear-weapon States parties to that Treaty. Since then, non-NWS have sought reassurance in the actions and declarations of the NWS that we are all on track in seeking the goal endorsed at the Extension Conference of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. I want to note here some developments in recent months which indicate a positive trend.

France, one of two NWS which conducted nuclear tests during these negotiations in the face of overwhelming international opposition, has now announced a definitive end to this activity. On 22 February, the countries of the South Pacific received welcome confirmation that France's test sites are to be closed.

The three NWS which have for long stood aside from a full commitment to respect the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone are now committed to associate themselves with this treaty, thus ending for all time a long history of testing the world's most destructive weapon in the South Pacific. The United States, France and the United Kingdom have announced that they will sign the Protocols in the near future. New Zealand greatly welcomes this.

Other regions of the world - Africa and South-East Asia - have declared their aspiration to be free of nuclear weapons, and are now seeking the support of the NWS.

The United States Senate agreement in late January to ratify the START II agreement brought closer the prospect of further reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia by the year 2003 or earlier. We look forward to comparable action on the part of the Russian Duma, and to the allocation of sufficient resources to implement this agreement.

Last Thursday, the President of France announced that it would phase out one arm of its nuclear capability with the closure of all land-based operations. France has also joined the United States and the United Kingdom in announcing an end to the production of fissile material for weapons purposes.

These steps are positive. The NWS, which bear a special responsibility for progress towards nuclear disarmament, cannot, however, rest on them. More needs to be achieved in a determined and systematic way. It is legitimate for States who have committed themselves not to pursue the nuclear option to press for the next steps towards nuclear disarmament. New Zealand wants to see the earliest possible start to negotiations banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear devices and even before future "cut-off" treaty negotiations are concluded, we should also seek to reach a consensus on what should be the next logical steps thereafter. New Zealand has already made one suggestion - a negotiated and verifiable agreement to ban the future production of nuclear weapons. The Canberra Commission, which we welcome, will, we hope, bring forward relevant proposals.

It is appropriate that all States should begin to reflect on what would be the appropriate forum in which progress on agreed specific steps forward might most readily be achieved, including the potential role for a multilateral body such as the CD. New Zealand supports the search for compromise on this issue which your predecessor embarked upon, Mr. President, and which you have undertaken to pursue.

(Mr. Armstrong, New Zealand)

In planning for the next steps, we should not lose sight of the fact that the goal of nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved unless we are prepared to take the first major step and make it no longer possible to significantly modify nuclear weapons or to design new ones through testing. That is why New Zealand has, along with many others represented in this hall, persisted in its efforts for a CTBT. Now that we are so close to such a ban it is disturbing that the negotiations are confronted by rising expectations or, conversely, by scepticism about what this ban will mean for nuclear disarmament. For its part, New Zealand firmly believes that it is an essential step.

In taking this first step of preventing the significant modification of nuclear weapons or the design of new ones, we contribute to both nuclear disarmament and to non-proliferation. But most importantly, we strengthen international norms against any nuclear weapon development and constrain the development of new strategies based on the deployment of nuclear weapons. The impact of a true-zero-yield CTBT, with no exceptions, can therefore reach far beyond the activity which it bans. For this reason, it is a meaningful, as well as an essential, step towards the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

I noted earlier the importance of visible and steady progress towards nuclear disarmament, and the usefulness of discussions on the next steps which might be taken up in a multilateral context. New Zealand shares the view of many others that these important activities can be pursued parallel to the work on our immediate goal of a CTBT, without the need for any direct linkage or conditionality.

If I can now turn to the CTBT negotiations, New Zealand sees progress to date as positive but hardly sufficient. What is needed now is not simply hard work. There must be new clarity in the nature of the tasks ahead. We should separate out the substantial tracts of text which can be readily agreed from those difficult issues which require all our efforts to be resolved. We need then to apply new and deliberate political will to finding solutions to these core issues. It is critical that the negotiations be concluded in time for signature of the new treaty at the outset of the next General Assembly. In this context, we warmly welcome the model treaty text which Australia, in the statement by the distinguished Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, has given us today. We also thank Iran for its contribution. Both have anticipated the urgent need for greater clarity at this stage of the negotiations. We have full confidence that you, as Chairman of the negotiations, will make the best possible use of these papers which have been tabled by Australia and Iran in an attempt to intensify the focus of our efforts on finding workable and acceptable solutions to the central issues.

New Zealand's overriding concern in these negotiations is to have all nuclear explosions stopped and banned as soon as possible. This is a treaty which will not only have far-reaching legal obligations, but will also have great moral force. Its value will reside as much in its existence as in the detail of the text. For this reason we favour a simple formula for entry into force which will not permit any State to hold the treaty hostage.

(Mr. Armstrong, New Zealand)

Once in force, the treaty organization must have the means readily to detect any suspicious events and bring to light any breaches. The contribution of New Zealand expertise to help design an international monitoring system is a demonstration of our concern for effective and affordable verification.

The role of the international data centre is to enable the treaty to be monitored by all States parties. For New Zealand this means that the IDC should analyse the data it receives to an extent sufficient to alert States parties to ambiguous events. If events are detected which raise questions about treaty compliance, States parties must be able to initiate a process of on-site inspection without delay. Measures to deter abusive OSI requests may be necessary to balance this right of immediate investigation, but there should be no scope for mischievous or arbitrary delaying tactics.

New Zealand will pay its share of the costs of securing an end to nuclear testing. We are also willing to host IMS monitoring stations which are considered essential to the detection, location and identification of events which may be nuclear explosions, subject, of course, to satisfactory funding arrangements. We intend to help the Prepcom and the eventual new organization operate on a cost-effective basis, where possible achieving savings and efficiency by utilizing the capacities of IAEA. We also intend to help manage the treaty's implementation by taking our turn, on the basis of fair and equitable arrangements, on the Executive Council.

Our views on these key issues for negotiation are mainstream. We are, however, prepared to work with others and to consider workable and acceptable alternatives. When she addressed the Conference at the beginning of this month, the distinguished Foreign Minister of Sweden called on every participating delegation to be prepared to compromise. Last week, the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico appealed to the Conference to make a last effort of moderation, or self-restraint, in order to achieve a treaty to which we have aspired for 42 years. New Zealand fully endorses these appeals.

The prospect that the Conference will conclude the CTBT negotiations soon raises the question of its own future. Everyone here in this hall is familiar with the CD's origins, the basis for its composition, its agenda and its working methods. We all agree that it is cast in an outdated mould, hence the ongoing efforts to reach agreement on a new membership, a modern agenda and improved working methods.

This year the Conference has appointed Ambassador Meghlaoui as Special Coordinator for the agenda, and we were pleased to be part of his consultations earlier this week. You, Mr. President, have committed yourself during your tenure to consult on the implementation of the decision on expansion (CD/1356). Another member of the Conference, Indonesia, has proposed that the Conference look at refining is rules of procedure in order to meet the new realities of today's world and as a potential tool to relieve the deadlock over the implementation of CD/1356.

(Mr. Armstrong, New Zealand)

New Zealand is ready to contribute to efforts to increase the accountability of the Conference and to make it more effective in delivering to the international community's priorities. Given the considerable resources put at the Conference's disposal, there is some urgency in these reform efforts at a time when the entire United Nations system faces a serious financial crisis.

In this context of accountability we note that the CD's future has been raised in the High-Level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System which meets in New York. New Zealand's view is that a body which does not reflect the fundamental changes in international security which have occurred since the end of the cold war cannot adequately serve the current international community. In no other area of international relations are agreements intended for universal adherence negotiated in a closed body which keeps countries with national interests at stake on the outside. This is a weakness of the CD for which we seek an urgent remedy. Agreement on the admission of the 23 countries already accepted for membership, and their fullest possible integration into all aspects of the CD's work in the meantime, will help to demonstrate that the CD remains capable of serving the international community as its negotiating body for disarmament and arms control agreements. It is high time that this step is taken.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of New Zealand for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, this is the second time that I am taking the floor under the presidency of the Netherlands in the Conference and I would like to express our sincere admiration for the exemplary manner in which you are directing the work of the Conference on Disarmament while, at the same time, chairing the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the support that we are receiving from Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, and also from his deputy Mr. Bensmail and from the members of the secretariat, in the current negotiations to draw up a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Today, we have heard important statements from two eminent persons from friendly countries, Poland and Australia. These two member countries have always been very active in the Conference on Disarmament and have made major contributions to the negotiations therein. First of all, I would like to welcome Ambassador Wyzner, Secretary of State and First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, and I would like to say how happy we are to see him again in Geneva after such a long absence. I congratulate him on the positive statement that he delivered this morning. That statement took, a constructive approach to many issues that are being negotiated with a view to the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. It also reflected positions that are close to those of Egypt in these negotiations, and we are highly satisfied with Poland's positive contribution to these negotiations that testifies yet again to Poland's constructive endeavours while

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

Ambassador Dembinsky was chairing the Working Group on Legal and Institutional Issues in 1994, and again in 1995 when he was Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban.

We listened with interest to the statement made by Mr. Michael Costello, the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia. That was the second time in February that the Conference has received the full text of a treaty banning nuclear tests and proposing solutions for a rapprochement on the various controversial issues that are still being negotiated. These two texts have come at a crucial stage in our negotiations when we are trying to finalize the text of the treaty.

As we clearly stated last week after hearing Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who also submitted a draft treaty, we welcome all contributions and attempts to reconcile positions and further the negotiations in a positive and constructive manner. After studying the Iranian text and the new Australian text, we are even more convinced that it will be possible to conclude a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty in the near future, hopefully this summer. We need only the political will and the requisite flexibility on the part of all in order to reach acceptable solutions on the vitally important issues in the treaty so that out endeavours will be crowned with success. We are glad that the Australian text of the treaty that was distributed today was not submitted as an alternative to the rolling text but rather as a useful source that will enrich the wording and contribute to the negotiations by proposing solutions to reach a consensus on the provisions of a treaty. Therefore, I would like to express our appreciation to the Australian delegation for its positive past and present contributions to the work of the Conference on Disarmament, which testify to the active endeavours that are being made by Ambassador Richard Starr, as demonstrated by Australia's initiative in 1992 to further the negotiations on a treaty banning chemical weapons. Australia also took a similar initiative to eliminate nuclear weapons within the framework of the Canberra Commission, the results of which we are eagerly awaiting. Australia's present initiative to further the negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty is yet another example of those endeavours.

We have taken note of the nuclear disarmament steps taken by France, as mentioned in the statement made by Ambassador Bourgois, which we welcome as positive steps that must be followed by others so that we can attain our ultimate goal agreed upon in article VI of the NPT and in the resolutions adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference held in 1995 in New York. Hence, we wish to reaffirm our previously declared position, expressed in the joint statement of the Group of 21, to the effect that nuclear disarmament steps should be negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament within a specific time-frame by establishing an ad hoc committee to consider that matter as soon as the negotiations on the NTB have been concluded.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka, Ambassador Goonetilleke.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): The Conference on Disarmament has just been treated to a presentation by Australia of a model CTB treaty text. My delegation deeply appreciates and warmly welcomes Australia's initiative which it has launched in order to accelerate the current CTBT negotiations. My delegation recalls with satisfaction Australia's positive contribution of a similar vein in March 1992, during the CWC negotiations. Sri Lanka has noted that the Australian model text does not seek to substitute the current rolling text; nor is it intended to be an alternative negotiating text. This is most reassuring, for Sri Lanka believes that there need not be an alternative to the rolling text at least for the present.

It is no secret that the commonly shared desire of the international community is to realize a world free of nuclear weapons. What we are currently engaged in, at the Conference on Disarmament, is an integral step in that direction. Once the CD completes its negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, it will be able to focus on other related subjects, which would bring us closer to our ultimate goal.

All of us in the Conference have an agreed priority, which we have set ourselves in defence to the call of the international community to complete the CTBT negotiations by the end of June this year. We have now reached the final stage of our negotiations. Should the current progress of our work be found to be inadequate, we must try to create a new momentum which must be sustained until the desired end.

If the Australian model text offers elements, textual proposals or treaty language that would help hasten the current negotiating effort and reach consensus, the Conference would do well to examine them for their utility.

You will recall that, exactly a week ago, the Conference had the benefit of the text presented by the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which my delegation saw as a useful contribution, and assuredly was also not an alternative to the current rolling text. The sentiments of ours expressed following the presentation of that text are equally relevant to the Australian model text, which my delegation is prepared to examine from the point of view of its utility to the ongoing negotiations.

Our current task is a formidable challenge. Its quintessential element is time. The time available to us for its completion is fast running out. We should not lose this window of opportunity at any cost. It is high time, therefore, that the Conference decided on its strategy for completing the negotiations. In this context, my delegation firmly believes that you, Mr. President, in your alternative capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, have a crucial role to play. In the eventuality of a stalemate, you may have to explore alternative approaches for accelerating the CTBT negotiations with a view to completing them on schedule.

Finally, I fully share the views expressed by Secretary Costello that time will not stand still for the CD to complete its negotiations at its own pace, oblivious to what is happening outside this hall. Decisions we take here will undoubtedly have a profound impact on the future of our world.

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

While being engaged in technical and political aspects of our negotiations, we have to be mindful of our responsibilities, not only to our respective Governments, but also to those who are outside the negotiating process.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sri Lanka for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Ghose.

Mrs. GHOSE (India): Mr. President, since this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of this position of responsibility, and also on your courage in shouldering two such extremely heavy burdens simultaneously. You know that you will count on the cooperation of the Indian delegation in your efforts both as President of the CD and as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. I cannot but also remember the sincere and tireless efforts of your predecessor, Ambassador U Aye, to whom I also would like to extend my thanks.

I have listened with as much attention and care to the presentation made today by the distinguished Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, Mr. Costello, of an Australian model CTBT as I had last week when His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Iran presented the Iranian text. We are deeply conscious and appreciative of the commitment of both countries to early completion of the CTBT in particular, and to the cause of nuclear disarmament in general. Both texts are, at the moment, being studied in detail in Delhi. I would, therefore, not make any substantive comments on either of the two texts. While necessarily priority attention will have to be concentrated on the new texts and formulations which emerge every day from the ongoing negotiations, none the less, we appreciate the spirit in which these texts have been presented. We are reassured to note that both texts have been presented as possible inputs to our ongoing negotiations, and not as replacements for the rather untidy texts on the basis of which we are currently working.

Every delegation has the right to present their national positions on the different issues before us, their views on where and how compromises might be reached, and their appreciation of what constitutes a balanced text. We expect that each delegation will, as indeed they are already doing, present their views and formulations as and when specific articles are being discussed in the several working, negotiating and drafting groups that are presently meeting.

To my delegation, there is only one text on the basis of which we can hope to get consensus and that is the current rolling text. Any change of this basis could temporarily exclude my delegation from the negotiations, a development which we would view with dismay and disappointment. In our efforts to speed up negotiations, we may very well end up by delaying them.

We are all committed to trying to complete negotiations on the CTBT by the end of June this year. Apart from the technical issues on which negotiations appear to be moving ahead, one of the core issues to which we have to address ourselves is the nature of the CTBT. With respect, this is

not a question of drafting or formulations. We need to start engaging in discussions to see how and whether we can agree on substance. Once the substantive gaps in approach are bridged - and I feel sure that with some more effort on all sides this will happen - appropriate formulations will not be difficult to find.

As I have stated earlier, my authorities at headquarters are still examining both texts very carefully. In the meantime, I would like to thank both delegations for the considerable amount of work that has obviously gone into these texts. The approaches of both texts marry, but then this partly reflects the diversity of approaches in the negotiations themselves. To marry them, merge them, or even choose between them would be an almost impossible task - at least for my delegation - and that would take too much time, a commodity of which we are woefully short. We look forward, instead, in the next four weeks to continue building some of the blocks you have asked for so that, by the end of this session, at least the framework of the treaty becomes visible.

During the inter-sessional period my delegation hopes that our capitals will have a more holistic view of the shape of the treaty to enable them to start identifying bottom lines. We remain committed in continuing to participate actively and sincerely in the complex negotiations before us.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of India for her statement and for the kind words she addressed to me, and I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Lafer.

Mr. LAFER (Brazil): As this is the first time that I take the floor since you assumed the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to warmly congratulate you and to pledge the Brazilian delegation's full cooperation in the discharge of your demanding duties. It is with great personal pleasure that I greet you, knowing of your previous diplomatic experience in Brazil and appreciating the friendliness you show towards my country. Your well-known diplomatic abilities, your previous participation in this forum, as well as your individual qualities all ensure that we are in good hands to tackle the difficult issues ahead of us.

Let me also pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador U Aye of Myanmar, who so ably guided us through the initial stages of the CD's work this year and got us off to a speedy re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban.

The reason why I ask for the floor is to make some brief remarks on the decision just announced by Secretary Michael Costello of Australia to present a model text for the CTB treaty, complete with explanatory notes. This initiative, which was preceded by démarches in capitals - including my own - is but the latest important contribution by Australia to the CTB negotiations. I would like, through you, Mr. President, to thank Australia for the work their representatives have put into the papers presented and express our support for the initiative to provide us with the result of their efforts.

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

I would also like to express our thanks to Iran, whose Foreign Minister, His Excellency Ali Akbar Velayati, presented a clean draft CTB text during last week's plenary meeting.

It is not my purpose at this time to make specific comments on the substance of these proposals, but rather to state our general view that such initiatives are helpful to and can prove to be very valuable at the current stage of negotiations, given the time-frame we ourselves have set for their conclusion. We believe negotiations can resolutely move into an end-game phase in the next few months, and, for our part, are ready to intensify efforts and to join others in going the extra mile in an attempt to bridge positions in order to finalize the CTB negotiations still in the first half of this year. Inputs in the form of well-researched clean texts can be decisive in facilitating workable compromises in all outstanding issues and show that, with political will on the part of all, a viable treaty is not only possible, but close at hand.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco, Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from French): Mr. President, I have pleasure in congratulating you very warmly on your taking the Chair of the Conference and assuring you that we are convinced that you will spare no effort in performing your duties and that once again the Netherlands delegation will make a very positive contribution to the work of the Conference both in the already rather weighty responsibilities of President of the Conference and in the crucial task falling to you of conducting the negotiations on the comprehensive nuclear test ban. I would like to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. I would also like to take this opportunity to say how satisfied we are with the praiseworthy efforts that were made under the presidency of the delegation of Myanmar and the success of Ambassador Aye, in particular in the prompt resumption of work on the CTBT. I would also like to welcome the Secretary of State of Poland, Mr. Wyzner, whose important statement deserves our full consideration.

If I have asked for the floor today, it is essentially following the major statement made by the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, Mr. Costello, concerning the text of Australia's contribution. I would like to express our satisfaction, at a moment when the negotiations are very difficult, at seeing a delegation like Australia submit a text that will certainly enable us to speed up our work. The delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco welcomes Australia's laudable efforts for disarmament. We have become accustomed to receiving very valuable proposals from Australia in this Conference, and we are convinced that the draft presented by the Secretary has the merit of being based on the rolling text and is certainly in keeping with the aim of intensifying and accelerating our negotiations so as to make decisive headway, which is necessary if we are to finish our work in the allotted time. Therefore, all of us together must ensure that the negotiations on the CTBT reach their conclusion in the allotted time.

The international community is looking for an encouraging sign and a message of hope. We are therefore under an obligation to achieve results. This is a political commitment that we have to honour. Hence we are in an emergency situation. For that reason any suggestion that can bring us closer to the goal aimed at should be considered with interest and be given all due attention. I can assure you in this connection that the Australian draft will be examined by my delegation with the greatest interest, with a concern to succeed as soon as possible in overcoming the difficulties that are slowing down the achievement of our objective. However, I would like to stress in particular that we are counting on you, Mr. President, your wisdom, your experience, your vision, as Chairman of this Committee, to translate, in terms of organization and practical arrangements, the need that has been acknowledged by everyone, I believe, here and elsewhere, this need to speed up our work and intensify our negotiations in order to enable us to have a treaty for signature by September, because I believe that if we recognize the urgency and if we recognize the need to intensify the proceedings, it will be necessary to translate all that into practical terms of working methods, and I think that this is one of the efforts which we must, under your presidency and under your guidance, try first to determine, and then buckle down to this task, because it is necessary to shift into a higher gear, and I believe that to recognize this is very good, but to do it would be better.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Morocco for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia, Ambassador Tarmidzi.

Mr. TARMIDZI (Indonesia): Mr. President, during the previous plenary session, I have already had the opportunity to congratulate you upon your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. Allow me, however, to reiterate the conviction of my delegation that with the excellent quality of your leadership, you will be able to guide us at this critical juncture leading to the completion of the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT), a task which the international community has entrusted us to finish in 1996.

Again I feel honoured to take the floor in this plenary session after listening attentively to the statement by His Excellency Mr. Wyzner, the Secretary of State, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, who has given us a lot of enlightening food for thought, especially on issues related to CTBT negotiations. Hopefully, it will inspire all delegations participating in the negotiations to resolve the outstanding questions which so far have prevented us from completing the CTBT in a timely fashion.

My delegation is also encouraged by the fact that another clean rolling text has been introduced by His Excellency Mr. Michael Costello, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, to be used as a resource paper in order to revamp the CTBT negotiations. Being one among those countries which worked relentlessly to create a nuclear-weapons-free world - as we have demonstrated recently by concluding the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone - Indonesia will enthusiastically welcome any courageous initiative which may lead to a speedy conclusion of a truly comprehensive test-ban treaty. We fully agree with the assessment made that, at this

(Mr. Tarmidzi, Indonesia)

particular juncture, what the Conference really needs is a political impetus in order to finish the negotiations. The Conference has been going through a great number of conceptual debates over the outstanding issues, which basically relate to the preamble, scope, on-site inspection, organization and entry into force. No stone has been left unturned as far as these questions are concerned, which has thus generated a clear understanding of the position of each country over the issues.

It is indeed within this context that my delegation warmly welcomes the bold and timely action which the Government of Australia has taken in preparing and tabling the paper which hopefully can be used as a basis for resolving the outstanding issues, leading ultimately to the conclusion of the CTBT negotiations within the agreed time-frame. My delegation would encourage all participating States to seriously study this paper which, I firmly believe, has been drawn up after carefully taking into account all national positions. My delegation will certainly study it carefully and will be more than willing to consider the paper if it can circumvent the existing conflicting positions and therefore provide a sound basis for the conclusion of a truly comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1996.

Let me conclude by recalling that a number of prominent figures have contributed to the Conference's common endeavours in an attempt to bring CTBT into reality. Some of them could no longer have the opportunity to witness the attainment of this lofty objective. It remains now for us not to miss the golden opportunity to conclude the CTBT over which they have so painstakingly laid down the groundwork. We are therefore duty-bound to complete the unfinished task left behind by our predecessors, especially the Nobel Laureate Dr. García Robles. My delegation will always cherish his clear vision on the nuclear-weapons-free world and his determined effort to bring the treaty into being. It would be a matter of great dismay to my country, should we fail to fulfil this pivotal responsibility.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Meghlaoui.

Mr. MEGHLAOUI (Algeria) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all I would like to say how much we appreciate the efforts you are making in your twin capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament and Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a treaty for the prohibition of nuclear tests. I would like to assure you of the full support of the Algerian delegation. I would also like to welcome the presence among us of two distinguished figures - Ambassador Wyzner, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland, who favoured us with a very rich and instructive statement; Mr. Costello, the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, gave us what may turn out to be a very valuable present, and my delegation warmly thanks him for it.

We are familiar with Australia's zeal for promoting all issues relating to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We appreciate and encourage the untiring efforts made by the Australian delegation in the Conference on

Disarmament. The major contribution which has been made today in the form of a draft text together with explanatory notes forms part of its renewed efforts.

Last week the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran also submitted a draft treaty. We have taken good note of that contribution. In Mr. Velayati's statement one sentence took our attention: "Yet, the majority of differences, as we are all aware, are of a political nature. They, thus, need to be resolved politically". On reading these words, one question immediately comes to mind: how should we integrate the texts that have been submitted to us in our work? In other words, how can we make the best possible use of them at this stage of the negotiations, which are characterized by continuing political differences? Nevertheless, we believe that these contributions are hopeful signals, very strong signals, which can convince us that the conclusion of a treaty within the desired time-frame is not beyond our grasp. However, we subscribe to the assessment that most of the differences are political. Hence we have to draw the conclusion once and for all and really knuckle down to resolving these issues. In fact that is the only option that remains open to us.

I am convinced that each of us here fervently wishes to conclude these negotiations by the deadline, that is to say at the latest by the end of June 1996. I am also convinced that each of us is concerned to handle the timetable of the Conference on Disarmament properly. If that is the case - and there are absolutely no grounds for believing the contrary - we must concentrate as a matter of priority on the important pending issues, and we must do so in a transparent manner, in order to avoid any unpleasant surprises.

I would like to remind you that my delegation has addressed some issues in the rolling text, it has clearly identified its concerns, it will make sure that they are taken into consideration. I would like to remind you in this respect that on 8 February 1996 my delegation set out its views at length on the current negotiations. It dwelt more specifically upon some parts of the rolling text consideration of which is deemed to be of high priority. It also emphasized the need to speed up negotiations. Today it underscores that need. The Conference on Disarmament must absolutely finalize the treaty within the time-frame laid down by the international community, an international community which is observing us and expecting us to produce concrete results, results which meet its profound aspirations, namely a universal treaty to bring about a complete ban on nuclear tests, which can be effectively verified, and which will make a real contribution to disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects. This is the constant desire of my delegation, which will do all that it can to ensure that the treaty we are negotiating will be ready by next June. My delegation would therefore make an urgent appeal for our work to be speeded up. Let us firmly come to grips with the "political" issues so as to settle them as soon as possible and allow the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to submit to us a text which will finally enable us to tell our capitals that the CD will meet the deadline set by the international community.

(Mr. Meghlaoui, Algeria)

I take this opportunity to announce that the Algerian Government has decided to support Austria's candidature to host the future CTBT organization. My delegation has already spoken in favour of an independent organization having very clearly defined links with IAEA. Vienna seems to us to be the appropriate capital to develop synergies to ensure greater effectiveness at a lower cost for the organization. Accordingly, we support Vienna.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar, Ambassador Aye.

Mr. AYE (Myanmar): Mr. President, may I first express the deep appreciation of my delegation for the effective manner in which you are guiding the work of the CD in your dual capacities as the President of the CD and the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban? I also take this opportunity to extend a most warm welcome to His Excellency Ambassador Wyzner, Secretary of State, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, no stranger to the CD, who had also contributed so substantively to our work so many years ago, and to hear from His Excellency Mr. Michael Costello, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia.

Last week, we had the privilege of hearing the Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran introduce a clean text of a CTBT in the CD plenary. This week, we have once again the pleasure of hearing the distinguished Secretary to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia present in the CD plenary the Australian model text on a CTBT. This is a most positive undertaking, and reflects among others the strong political commitments by the member States of the CD to the completion of the CTBT negotiations in good time in 1996.

We have listened with great interest to the important and helpful statement by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia. I should like to congratulate him on the presentation of the new Australian textual proposal. My delegation is highly appreciative of this new Australian initiative and the substantive contribution made to date by Australia to the CTBT negotiations. This also reminds us of the Australian text on chemical weapons during the CW negotiations and the active part played by Australia in the work of the CD on several issues. The Australian proposal no doubt presented after much arduous work by the Australian delegation deserves to be carefully studied. I am confident that it will also serve as a catalyst to speed up the ongoing CTBT negotiations.

Myanmar's position on CTBT is well known. We desire a complete and total ban on all nuclear-test explosions or other nuclear explosions in all environments for all time. In this respect, we can sense that there is an emerging convergence of views on the Australian proposal on scope contained in document CD/NTB/WP.222. My delegation believes that, with some slight modifications, the Australian proposal on scope can provide a basis for reaching a possible consensus formulation on this important issue. My delegation also shares the view that, although the rolling text is still cluttered with some 1,200 brackets, there are in essence only a handful of

distinctive core difficulties, from which those brackets emanate. These include the issues of scope, the preamble, OSI, the organization and entry into force. Perhaps, concentrated efforts to resolve these core problems will be helpful to speed up the entire process of the CTBT negotiations.

Mr. President, with yourself at the helm of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, the Committee is in excellent hands. I wish you speedy success in this task. I continue to extend to you the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Myanmar for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Peru, Ambassador Urrutia.

Mr. URRUTIA (Peru) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, first and foremost allow me to congratulate you on taking up the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I wish to assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation in the discharge of your duties. I would also like to express the appreciation of my delegation to Ambassador Aye of Myanmar for the way in which he performed his duties and the efforts he made in the consultations he conducted on subjects of the greatest importance for the outcome of our work.

I am happy to associate myself with the speakers who have preceded me in welcoming the distinguished Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Mr. Costello, and conveying our gratitude to him for his important contribution this morning and for the initiative presented.

On this occasion, I will be brief and I will deal at length with the matters of substance at a future plenary meeting. My delegation considers that, by definition, any contribution is always welcome, especially when the intention is to conclude without further delay such a large-scale undertaking as the signing of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Peru vigorously supports the early conclusion of this treaty, and it is in that context that it praises both the initiative introduced by Mr. Costello and the initiative introduced by the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iran last week. We are pleased at the assertion made by both authorities that their proposals do not seek to constitute alternatives to or replacements for the present working text. We consider with appreciation that these initiatives are designed to accelerate the pace of negotiations that we are all determined to conclude in the next few months, and we believe that the Conference on Disarmament has to make the best possible use of both proposals in order to seek suitable solutions to the outstanding issues. My delegation will study the two proposals and will make its views known in the coming weeks. We wish to reiterate, Sir, our trust in your remarkable diplomatic skill and perseverance in order to give practical shape to these efforts.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Peru for his statement and now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Ambassador Hoffmann.

Mr. HOFFMANN (Germany): Mr. President, as it is the first time that I take the floor under your presidency let me congratulate you for the assumption of this very demanding responsibility. I am fully confident that

(Mr. Hoffmann, Germany)

you will guide us successfully in your double capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Nuclear Test Ban, and President of the Conference on Disarmament through a delicate phase of our negotiations.

I think we are on a good track. But time is still necessary to find a solution to still pending issues. Germany absolutely wants to sign this treaty this year and as early as possible. We will support every effort of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee to accelerate this process. We are prepared to devote more time in this regard, even if this means evening meetings, and we are willing to concentrate on the crucial issues we all have to tackle.

We welcome the fact that delegations are taking the negotiations very seriously. This has been demonstrated by the tabling of the Iranian draft last week and of the Australian draft this week. These drafts are pushing the negotiations in the right direction. We should use them as useful resource papers. I hope they will make the task of the Chairman a little easier in as much as he can take them into consideration for his guidance that will show us the way forward in the final phase of our negotiations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and would now like to give the floor to the representative of South Africa, Ambassador Selebi.

Mr. SELEBI (South Africa): Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the office of President of the Conference on Disarmament. As President - and also in your capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban - you will have the task to lead us in our work as we move towards the end of the first part of the 1996 session. The progress which we have to make during this period in the negotiations for the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty will be of key importance if we are to meet our stated goal of concluding the CTBT "so as to enable its signature by the outset of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly".

These remarks lead me to the reason why I have intervened during this plenary meeting. My delegation wishes to extend its appreciation to the delegations of Australia and Iran for the work which they have done in preparing model texts for the CTBT. Both documents will be a valuable resource and tool in the negotiations, not only for yourself, as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, but also to the Chairmen of the two Working Groups and to individual delegations such as my own. We appreciate the approach which these two delegations have taken and commend them for the hard work which this has obviously entailed. These texts show that with a spirit of compromise our goal of finishing the CTBT by the middle of this year is well within reach.

Whilst we have only had very limited time to study the Australian model text, we have found that theirs, as well as the Iranian text, have included some innovative ideas which could well assist us in finding solutions to some of the difficult issues which still need to be addressed. We will continue to study these texts in greater detail and will provide our comments when the relevant issues are under discussion.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of South Africa for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. As I indicated, I would now like to suspend this meeting of the plenary. This meeting will resume this afternoon at 3 p.m. and, as you know, will be followed by Working Group 2 of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban after the adjournment of the plenary.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m. and resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: The 727th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

I have on my list of speakers for this afternoon the representatives of Bulgaria, Canada, Mexico, Norway, Nigeria, the United States of America, Japan, Argentina, Sweden, the Russian Federation, China, Italy, Romania and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria, Ambassador Dobrev.

Mr. DOBREV (Bulgaria): I will be very, very brief. I would like to join previous speakers in extending our appreciation for the impressive work done by the Australian delegation. My delegation warmly welcomes their timely initiative and we consider the clean text, together with the explanatory notes presented this morning by the honourable Secretary, Mr. Costello, as another proof of the strong commitment of his Government to the quick achievement of positive results in finalizing the text of the CTBT. We note that the document is not meant to replace the existing rolling text. Nevertheless, it may appear very useful from a practical point of view, serving as a model text - model text for the final phase of our endeavours. I take this opportunity to reiterate my delegation's wish for the work on the treaty to be further accelerated so that the Conference could meet the expectations of the international community to have the treaty concluded as soon as possible. We are convinced that the Australian draft can bring us closer to that end.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Bulgaria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I would now like to invite the representative of Canada, Ambassador Moher, to take the floor.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Mr. President, I apologize for coming in a few minutes late. Your promptness is a good sign, I hope, for the negotiations and my being late is not a bad sign. The comment I want to make this afternoon is an ad hoc one. It is the hope of my delegation that there will be an opportunity later in this session for a fuller statement, a more comprehensive statement, by Canada. But I do of course want to compliment you in your office as President and to confirm our confidence in you as you deal with two onerous functions. I just want to express the appreciation of my delegation to your predecessor, Ambassador U Aye, whose invaluable contribution in the early phase of our work is deeply appreciated and certainly I had the opportunity of benefiting from that during that period. I also want to recognize and express appreciation to Ambassador Wyzner of Poland this morning for his comments and contribution to our work and certainly to Mr. Michael Costello, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia.

(Mr. Moher, Canada)

The real point of this ad hoc intervention today is to emphasize that Canada shares the widespread concern over the need to accelerate, focus and discipline our work. All of those qualities will be necessary if we are going to achieve the historic and essential objective of a CTBT by the end of June of this year at the latest. Such a document, such an instrument, will, in Mr. Costello's words, "consolidate international non-proliferation norms and ... bring substantial disarmament benefits", and I join Canada to the eloquent plea that he made this morning on that basis. The concern that I am expressing is reinforced by our ongoing efforts as your Friend of the Chair on on-site inspections. We see scope and OSI as two of the most critically important dimensions requiring early substantive movement in these negotiations. If I can digress just for a moment on scope, I would like to put on record here formally in this plenary Canada's very strong allergy to the concept of peaceful nuclear explosions. This is an allergy that we have had for the last 30 years; it has not decreased over the last 30 years and therefore we feel that the views of many countries in this Conference on that need to be recognized and I certainly welcome the comments this morning by Poland, Hungary and New Zealand in that direction.

Going back to both scope and OSI, we think the time has come for early basic political decisions to be taken if we are going to make the progress that we need to make in our negotiations. Against the background of that concern, we welcome the two national contributions that have been made. We, Canada, have already benefited significantly from the opportunity to study the text submitted by Iran last week. And we look forward to benefiting in a similar fashion from a detailed perusal of the Australian contribution today. We are sure that both will provide valuable and useful complementary material to that before us in the rolling text as we move forward. Our sincere appreciation is expressed to each of those delegations for the very significant work that they have undertaken and now share with us.

Returning to my central theme, we see the urgent need to make real progress expeditiously in March. We increasingly feel that the question is not, in most respects, a question of having texts. We have, in fact, an increasing wealth of texts. What we do need is those few political decisions which will allow us to move forward. In the work that we are doing on on-site inspections, I think, in a snapshot, it is fair to say that certain decisions not being taken have led delegations to build fire walls into the text that we are developing. They feel that they must develop or protect their positions in numerous places through the process and through the text. And, therefore, in our view, to get rid of those fire walls and to reach agreement, we need to reach the kind of key political decisions on literally five or six issues that are necessary. Canada will continue to work with you as we address this problem and we will certainly support you in all your efforts to facilitate and focus our collective endeavours during the critical few weeks ahead.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Canada, Ambassador Moher, for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I should now like to give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador de Icaza.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the second time under your presidency, I will not congratulate you, so that we can save two or three minutes. In fact I will be brief. I wish to associate myself with the delegations that have underscored the importance of the presentations made today by Ambassador Wyzner and by Mr. Michael Costello. Likewise, I wish to express appreciation for the text of the model treaty introduced today by the distinguished Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, which now joins the text submitted last week by the delegation of Iran in the wealth of material available to help us to achieve, by the deadline we have set ourselves, a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Subject to careful study of the valuable Australian contribution, we think that its submission as an example of a possible basis for compromise indicates, in the first place, that compromise is still possible. We find the same sign in the Iranian initiative and we think that these two exercises are an impetus to redouble our efforts and strive to take the political decisions on the key alternatives as soon as possible. Obviously, the success of our efforts will depend on our being able to show flexibility and understanding of the interests of other parties and, to take up the words of my friend Ambassador Moher, to inoculate ourselves against allergies.

I also wish to convey my appreciation to the distinguished Australian delegation for the efforts it has made to explain to us the path it followed to come up with the solutions contained in the text. The explanatory notes are especially useful and give us a clear indication of Australia's assessment of different alternatives and its opinion as to what balances and intermediate solutions might be arrived at.

One of the most important features of the model texts which have been submitted to us are the overviews of the structure of the treaty. We think that with these texts, on the basis of the rolling text and taking account of the identification we have carried out of the few areas that remain problematical, it is time to organize our work in a more flexible fashion so as to make full use of the impetus that we have now and the opportunity we have been given of attaining our objective in the scant 10 weeks of intensive negotiations that still remain.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Norway, Ambassador Skogmo.

Mr. SKOGMO (Norway): Mr. President, as this is the first time I take the floor in the plenary this session, may I first congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation? Let me also express our gratitude to the previous president, Ambassador Aye of Myanmar, inter alia for his willingness to personally consult countries which are not yet full members of the CD on issues of concern to us.

My Government intends to make a more substantive statement on the issues before the Conference later in the session. Today, I would like to express Norway's appreciation of the valuable work undertaken by Iran and Australia in producing complete model texts of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Those

(Mr. Skogmo, Norway)

national contributions demonstrate in a constructive and useful way how close we actually are to an agreement. Provided the necessary political will is present, it should clearly be realistic to conclude the CTBT negotiations by June this year.

The Norwegian Government very much shares the sense of urgency and concern about the time factor that was evident in the statement by Mr. Costello and by several others this morning, and again this afternoon. We think that the time has come to intensify the negotiations and focus on achieving convergence on the outstanding key issues. The members of the Conference have an obligation to accelerate the process in order to meet the timetable that has been drawn up by the General Assembly.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Norway for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria, Ambassador Abuah.

Mr. ABUAH (Nigeria): Mr. President, let me congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. You are a veteran of the multilateral system, having served in this forum in the not too distant past. Your experience, therefore, equips you to discharge the dual mandate entrusted to you both as the President of the Conference on Disarmament as well as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee negotiating the comprehensive test-ban treaty. You can count on Nigeria for support in the discharge of your onerous mandate. Let me, again, congratulate Ambassador U Aye on his many contributions to our efforts.

I wish to join other delegations to welcome to this forum the distinguished First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Ambassador E. Wyzner, and Mr. Michael Costello, Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia. Their presence in this important body reflects the priority their countries attach to disarmament.

Last week in this forum, we had the privilege of listening to the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, who presented a treaty text to accelerate the pace of negotiation. Australia has equally favoured the CD with another treaty text with the objective of pushing forward the negotiations. I want to thank the Australian and Iranian Governments for their texts. Their separate efforts underline the importance which the two countries attach to the speedy conclusion of the CTBT negotiation. In the view of Nigeria, the two texts represent important useful source materials which could be drawn upon in the search for compromise.

In our statement of 8 February 1996, we identified the major areas on which early agreement is needed. In the three weeks since we made that statement, progress has been rather slow. If the pace of work continues in the same pattern, we may not have a CTBT text ready for the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Such an opportunity missed may not come back until all international political forces are once again in harmony. Nigeria recognizes that there are no simple answers to the many problems facing the rolling text. However, in our view, we feel the problems can be resolved, given the necessary political will to do so. The time is now and the

opportunity must be grasped to have a truly comprehensive CTBT that will contribute not only to nuclear non-proliferation but also to nuclear disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Ledogar.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): I had not intended to speak today, but would not want United States silence to be misconstrued. First, Mr. President, let me also offer you the traditional congratulations on your assumption of the Chair during this crucial period, confident that under your leadership these four weeks will mark a significant turning-point in the negotiations.

As others have pointed out, last December we agreed in New York to conclude the nuclear-test-ban treaty early enough this year so that we can all sign it in September, on the eve of the fifty-first General Assembly. Today, it is clear that this objective is achievable. Both Iran and Australia have shown us how it can be done. They have reached into the mass of material and ideas before us, given to it order and structure, and they have refocused many issues to enable us better to make key decisions. Very importantly, both efforts together demonstrate the extent to which there is already widespread agreement on so many issues. Thus, the Conference now has before it all the necessary material to facilitate the negotiations. The rolling text represents the painstaking work of the past two years and offers much that is agreed. Iran and Australia have given us structure and offered potential solutions to some difficult issues. In addition, the Working Group Chairmen and various Friends of the Chairs are working on discrete issues and will be coming forward soon with ideas designed to move the process forward expeditiously.

Mr. President, these tools will help you, as NTB Chairman, to focus delegations on what remains to be done. The groundwork has been laid. It is time to energize the process and to shift into higher gear. All in this hall have stressed the commitment of their respective Governments to the objective of concluding a CTBT as early as possible this year. We must turn these words into action. We look to you to show us the way.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement, for the kind words he addressed, and I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Kurokochi.

Mrs. KUROKOCHI (Japan): Mr President, I shall be very brief, but since it is the first time for me to take the floor under your presidency, may I first express my sincere congratulations for your assumption of the presidency of the Conference? I am confident that under your able leadership, which you have already amply demonstrated as the Chairman of the Nuclear Test Ban Ad Hoc Committee, we will tackle the difficult yet important tasks before us in the CD with successful results. I assure you of the full cooperation of my

(Mrs. Kurokochi, Japan)

delegation as we take on these challenges. Allow me also to express my deep appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Aye of Myanmar, who served as President in an exemplary manner during the first part of the 1996 session.

I asked for the floor today to join other delegations to express our appreciation for the efforts made by the delegations of Iran and Australia in submitting respectively a draft text for a CTBT. These proposals will certainly be a useful resource for our deliberations, and my delegation will carefully study the contents of these proposals. So I shall refrain from commenting on the substance at this stage. But I am very much encouraged today that many speakers who preceded me emphasized the pressing need to intensify our negotiations toward early conclusion of the CTBT. My delegation has been asserting since last summer that it is essential to have the convergence of views on major issues by the end of this CD session which is quickly approaching.

I would like to stress that now we have reached a critical point of negotiation where we have to adjust respective national positions to find common ground. With the emerging sense of urgency I noted in this Conference, I hope that these efforts will create the impetus for more focus in negotiations and the momentum to reach assent under your guidance as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to express Japan's appreciation for the recent announcement of disarmament measures made by the French President Chirac, as was explained today. The Government of Japan welcomes these recent decisions by France as they show her positive attitude towards nuclear disarmament. Among those decisions, in particular, the decision to stop the production of nuclear materials for military purposes is a welcome harbinger for future negotiations on the convention banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We expect that the French initiative will have a positive impetus toward an early commencement of the negotiations on fissile material cut-off in the CD.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Japan for her statement and for the kind words she addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina, Mr. Benítez.

Mr. BENITEZ (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): First of all, Mr. President, I wish to associate myself with the words of congratulation extended to you this morning on your taking up the Chairs of this Conference and the Ad Hoc Committee, reiterating to you our delegation's complete readiness to cooperate in your new tasks, as well as the words of appreciation for the excellent work performed by your predecessor, Ambassador Aye of Myanmar. I have taken the floor to express appreciation and welcome for the presentation of two important contributions to the progress of our negotiations on the future nuclear-test-ban treaty, the "clean" texts submitted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iran last week and by the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Australia at today's meeting. We consider that both are most valuable contributions to give a new and firm impetus to the ongoing negotiations. We believe that they also offer

proof that a convergence of views is possible and that, in the diversity of opinions that enriches our work, there is a high probability of consensus. We all know that the conclusion of the nuclear-test-ban treaty before the middle of 1996 is the most important and immediate challenge in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation facing the international community. It is a commitment we have assumed and we are working against time to fulfil it properly. We have observed notable progress since the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee. Differences remain, it is true, but it is also true that today the negotiations are at a crucial phase that requires a joint effort and depends on the real political will of all States so that we can or cannot have a treaty open for signature before the fifty-first General Assembly of the United Nations, as stipulated in resolution 50/65.

We know, as has already been stated before this forum, that there will be no satisfactory treaty without compromise. However, the very existence of the treaty is in the common interest of all our countries and the only way of attaining this is by intensifying the negotiations in order to achieve convergence and common solutions. In this context Argentina greatly appreciates this new effort by two such significant countries in our negotiations, and believes that both should necessarily lead to their intensification. We cannot but express thanks in particular for this second text submitted to us by Australia, because a first reading has revealed to us an effort made to recover points of consensus, sometimes tacit ones, which we have been able to identify in the recent course of these negotiations. We believe that this is one of its major advantages, which makes it an instrument of great value for the pursuit of our work. This clean text, which, has been mentioned, does not replace the existing rolling text, is undoubtedly, like the one submitted at the last plenary meeting, of invaluable assistance to all those States involved in these negotiations, and we are convinced that in the same way it may also be of use to you, Mr. President, in your efforts to lead us to an early successful conclusion. This will be an invaluable step towards the final goal of nuclear disarmament, a goal which can only be attained through a realistic strategy of progressive prudent and specific targets, like this one.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair, and I would now like to give the floor to the representative of Sweden, Mr. Ekwall.

Mr. EKWALL (Sweden): Mr. President, since this is the first time our delegation takes the floor in the plenary under your presidency, we should first of all like to extend our sincere congratulations to you on your assumption of this important post at this crucial juncture of the work of the CD. You can count on the full support of the Swedish delegation, both in your capacity as the President of the Conference and as Chairman of the NTB Ad Hoc Committee.

I have asked for the floor to joint other delegations in thanking Australia for presenting today their model treaty text for the CTBT. We will on our part study this material closely and revert later with comments in substance. At this stage, I should, however, like to note that the Australian text, as well as the text presented by Iran last week, constitute important

(Mr. Ekwall, Sweden)

inputs and, I would say, impetus into the work on the CTBT. In a general sense I indicate that we have now reached the stage where the CTBT should indeed be within our reach shortly. They, therefore, send a strong signal for all of us to energize and intensify even further the ongoing negotiating process.

In thanking Australia again for the text they have presented today, I would like to express the hope of my delegation that we will now proceed rapidly towards the conclusion of the CTBT with the help of all the valuable text resources and proposed solutions that the Ad Hoc Committee now has before it.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Berdennikov.

Mr. BERDENNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, since I am taking the floor for the first time since you took over the presidency of the Conference, allow me to congratulate you on this occasion and wish you every success, and also assure you of our entire readiness to cooperate in a comprehensive and fruitful manner in carrying out the weighty tasks facing the Conference. I would also like to welcome the fact that the Secretary of State, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Mr. Wyzner is participating in the work of our Conference today. We listened most attentively to his important statement.

The negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty have now entered the most difficult stage, where what is required first and foremost from the participants is political will and maximum readiness to agree on the most complex elements of the treaty, to have a clear picture of the prospects and the final outcome. In that context, the efforts made by the delegations of Iran and Australia, which have submitted model draft treaties for the consideration of the participants in the negotiations, deserve our gratitude. We have taken note of the explanations provided on the texts they have submitted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iran, Mr. Velayati, and the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs of Australia, Mr. Costello, whom I have the honour to welcome among us now. In particular, we have noted that these drafts are not viewed by their authors as replacements for the current rolling text of the treaty and are intended by them to constitute an additional source of possible ways to find solutions which will suit everybody. On this basis, these documents will be thoroughly studied both in our delegation and in Moscow. For our part, we see the efforts of Iran and Australia as showing a sincere intent to help in the negotiations, and this can only be welcomed. To the extent that specific proposals contained in the Iranian and Australian texts help us to find solutions in line with the Russian approach, we will be ready to use them. We note with satisfaction that the submission of these two models texts has prompted many delegations to reaffirm their commitment to the completion of work on the CTBT as soon as possible this year, 1996. This, of course, is a desire shared by the delegation of the Russian Federation. Once again, I would like to thank the delegations of Iran and Australia for their efforts to help us in our negotiations.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me. I give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Sha.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation would like to congratulate you on taking up the presidency of the CD. My delegation has great confidence in your outstanding diplomatic skills and ability. We are convinced that under your guidance, we will make great progress in our CTBT negotiations. I would also like to take this opportunity to assure you of the utmost cooperation on the part of my delegation.

Concerning the present state of negotiations here, the Chinese delegation feels that we are on the right track. Different parties have different assessments concerning the progress of negotiations. We share the feeling of everybody that we should accelerate our negotiations so as to make progress at the earliest date. My delegation has all along maintained that we should achieve a treaty at an early date, but not later than 1996. Concerning a specific date, my delegation believes that we are not fortune-tellers. It can be 30 June, or it can be earlier than 30 June. If it is deferred for a few days for various reasons I don't see what difference that would make. Relevant General Assembly resolutions have not specified the date of 30 June. My delegation will make an effort to conclude the CTBT negotiations under the guidance of the target date specified in the General Assembly resolutions. I do not think there is great meaning in talking abstractly about a specific date. The important thing is to work harder and solve practical problems in a businesslike manner.

For my delegation, the rolling text is the only basis for our work. There is no other basis whatsoever. Every delegation has the right to put forward its text. We welcome any text put forward by any country while the negotiations are going on. In such a light, we appreciate the efforts made by Iran and Australia in tabling their own texts. Whether or how a delegation will use their texts is a matter to be decided by that delegation itself. This is the freedom and right of each delegation. Of course, my delegation will seriously study the texts put forward by the Iranian delegation and by the Australian delegation.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of China for his statement and for the kinds words addressed to me. I give the floor to the representative of Italy, Ambassador Vattani.

Mr. VATTANI (Italy) (translated from French): Mr. President, first of all allow me to express Italy's best wishes for the role that you are playing in addition to the other role that has already been entrusted to you for the entire year, that of bringing us to the successful conclusion of negotiations which can give us a good CTBT by the date desired by all of us, that is to say, before the end of June 1996. I would also like to thank your predecessor, the Ambassador of Myanmar, who succeeded in the task of getting this session's negotiations started promptly. Rarely have we had the feeling that we have today in listening to the speakers that have taken the floor during this session. Rarely have we witnessed such signs of determination to move ahead and to attain concrete results with a constructive spirit on all

(Mr. Vattani, Italy)

sides. If it has been possible for this spirit to be manifested today, it is truly as a result of the efforts of certain delegations, and I would like to mention the delegations of Iran and Australia, which have submitted texts, model conventions, that can be of great value to us. Of course, I share the views of those delegations that have indicated that this effort is not going to replace the work that we have been undertaking for two years in the framework of the Conference, on the basis of what is called the rolling text. Yet it is true that the fact of having this Iranian document and this Australian document in our hands, both of them exhaustive and well-structured, gives us an indication of how we might proceed in the coming days to maintain the commitment we entered into when the consensus resolution was adopted in the framework of last year's United Nations General Assembly. Like all the other delegations around this table, we will study the content of these texts carefully. We will of course conduct an analysis of what they represent compared with the rolling text as it has been negotiated to date. But I believe that, and this can be seen clearly as of today, in listening to the reactions of several delegations, that these two national efforts allow a glimpse of a close end to the negotiations. On behalf of the delegation of Italy I would like to say how grateful we are to the delegation of Iran, the delegation of Australia and the Secretary of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, who was kind enough to come to Geneva to present us with his text, on which we will be able to work, using it as a very effective tool, and I really would like to extend our most heartfelt thanks to them.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of Italy for his statement and the kind words you addressed to me as the Chair, and I would like to give the floor to the delegate of Romania.

Mr. ISTRATE (Romania): Mr. President, since it is the first time that I take the floor under your presidency, I would like to express the Romanian delegation's warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the CD, and to wish you every success in discharging your important duties. Like others, I would like to express our appreciation for the consolidated draft text submitted by the Iranian and the Australian delegations respectively. We are confident that these valuable contributions will assist in a most productive way our negotiations, and help you lead us towards concluding the CTBT by June this year.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Romania for his statement and kind words he addressed to me, and while he was speaking, the representative of the United Kingdom asked for the floor.

Mr. TAUWHARE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): We hadn't planned to make an intervention today, and I regret the absence of my Ambassador, who is in London attending consultations on the CTBT today. However, having sat here through the morning and half of the afternoon and heard the almost unanimous chorus of welcome for both the Australian text presented today, and for the Iranian text presented last week, I felt I couldn't remain silent and ought to join our delegation to the welcome that was given earlier by other delegations to these two texts. And also to the sense that, again, has very unanimously, I feel, been expressed around the

(Mr. Tauwhare, United Kingdom)

room in terms of the need now to intensify work on the CTBT to move to a new, different phase of negotiations in order that we can complete successfully our work before the end of June.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his statement, and this then concludes my list of speakers for today.

I should like now to take up the request from Swaziland to participate in the work of the Conference during this year, which is before you under a covering note by the President in document CD/WP.473. May I take it that the Conference decides to invite Swaziland to participate, as a non-member, in the work of the Conference, without having to convene an informal meeting for this purpose, on the understanding that this would not constitute a precedent for future similar requests?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The secretariat has circulated, at my request, a tentative timetable of meetings for next week. This timetable is, as usual, merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. On this understanding, may I assume that the timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind you that, in accordance with the timetable of meetings for this week, this plenary meeting will be followed immediately by a meeting of Working Group 2 of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 7 March 1996, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.728
7 March 1996

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 7 March 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Ramaker (Netherlands)

GE.96-60859 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 728th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers the representatives of Kenya, Cuba, the Russian Federation and Brazil. However, before listening to the speakers inscribed today, allow me, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to extend a cordial welcome to those representatives of non-governmental organizations who are present in the public gallery today. As you are aware, International Women's Day will be celebrated tomorrow, 8 March, and to mark that occasion, the NGO community will address a message to the Conference. I am sure that the Conference joins me in extending our very best wishes to all the women present in the room today in saying how much we appreciate their constant commitment to peace and disarmament and their continued interest in our endeavours.

I should now like to give the floor to the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, who will read out their message to the Conference.

Mr. PETROVSKY (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations): The message reads as follows:

"Esteemed members of the Conference on Disarmament:

"We, women from different countries and organizations, are gathered in Geneva at the annual seminar for International Women's Day. We are honoured to address you again in 1996, the year that will be remembered, hopefully, for the successful completion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. After 42 years of campaigning for the CTBT, we are encouraged by the progress you are making in finalizing this treaty. We urge you to do your utmost to fulfil the expectations of the women and men of the world who have clearly demonstrated that nuclear testing is not acceptable. A zero-yield test ban is the first step towards eradicating these atrocious weapons. We trust this treaty will be a true comprehensive test ban. To allow for any kind of nuclear explosion would undermine the credibility of the whole treaty. As chemical and biological weapons are prohibited, so must nuclear weapons be prohibited.

"The focus of this year's seminar is the issue of conversion, which we consider to be an essential, practical component for effective disarmament. The Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995 states that Governments must act to convert military resources and related industries to development and peaceful purposes. In this the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, we are called to work to reclaim society's investment into the military in order to move from a costly culture of war to an equitable culture of peace. Conversion is about moving away from military priorities without creating unemployment and toxic or unusable land.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

"Conversion is not only about the conversion of military spending and military industry to civilian use, it is also about employment, social justice and environmental restoration. A comprehensive strategy for peace and disarmament involves promoting industrial and political shifts, which are the necessary preconditions for transforming present military priorities. The move towards real security could be realized by committing to an actual peace dividend.

"Although the excesses of bipolar military confrontation are in the past, they leave behind a massive array of weapons, postures and attitudes, many of them searching for new threats to justify extension of their roles at a time of declining defence budgets. However, as changes are made to political structures, industries and attitudes, an opportunity exists to reallocate significant resources to other productive activities. We should now decide to change the culture of violence that is enshrined by vast amounts of weaponry. This challenge is the inspiration for conversion strategies.

"Political systems tend to support planning which shows a social or economic return on political investment within 5 to 10 years at the most - 1 to 2 is often preferred. However, like any good business venture, conversion will require significant investment over a long period of time, but not as long as it took to institute a permanent war industry. Conversion programmes to reallocate finances, reorient research and development, restructure industry, reintegrate personnel, find alternative uses for military bases and installations and dismantle, reuse or scrap surplus weapons are all projects that require planning and deserve generous funding. Mechanisms are available to Governments to encourage such developments, including direct subsidies as well as incentives for industries to conduct basic research, improve technology transfer, support job training and education and environmental regulations. Inga Thorsson, once a delegate to the CD, concluded that for every job that vanishes in the military sector, two can appear in the civilian sector. Her study showed that with careful planning and adequate investment, the traditional arguments against conversion are not substantiated. All that is required is the political will to make a long-term investment for a peaceful future.

"In our seminar we have heard about concrete examples of conversion undertaken by a coalition of once defence-dependent councils throughout Europe, successfully converting their economies and environments. Network Demilitarised, a project funded by the European Union, recognizes that planning and community consultation are essential for the smooth conversion of military bases throughout Europe. Conversion in countries in transition has been a major focus of our seminar. It has been explained that an important condition for ensuring conversion strategies is multilateral cooperation and support, because the economic and social costs of conversion are very difficult to sustain without financial support. We have also learnt that conversion in war-torn societies is an essential part of demobilization and building a long-term peace. The

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

demobilization programme in Mozambique is an example of where, like any good venture, significant investment pays. Combatants were offered an 18-month pay-out package which gave them the security to retrain and begin a new life out of the military. The positive response to this programme was overwhelming, illustrating that assistance and incentives are required for those who have undergone prolonged warfare and perhaps know few other skills.

"Disarmament has major social and economic effects, involving both costs and benefits. Global military spending is still an inappropriate and unacceptable drain on the world's resources and a danger to peace. Military expenditure in the world today is estimated to be in the region of US$ 1 trillion. Just one quarter of that sum can provide clean water for all, cancel the debt of developing nations, provide shelter for all, provide health care for all, prevent global warming, stabilize the world's population, stop ozone depletion, eliminate starvation and malnutrition, eliminate illiteracy, prevent soil erosion and provide clean, safe energy.

"A coherent and responsible policy on global disarmament is not being pursued when aggression and the arms trade continue to be encouraged. The supply of arms to nations in situations of tension or potential tension only exacerbates feelings of mistrust between nations, thereby providing a fertile environment for the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons. It is not feasible to aim for nuclear arms control and disarmament when a conventional arms race is encouraged.

"The ongoing disarmament work done by NGOs on issues such as land-mines and nuclear testing can only complement the CD's ongoing work on disarmament. To this end, we would urge the Conference on Disarmament to consider enlarging the role of NGOs in the work of the CD. Our work represents the voices of many women around the world who are active at local and national levels working to strengthen awareness and action on disarmament matters.

"We need to envision a world that has evolved from settling conflicts by warfare. As the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, the CD is a forum where changed international circumstances can really bear the fruit of disarmament. This year's International Women's Day seminar encourages you in your urgently relevant work for disarmament and peace."

The message is signed by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Women's World Summit Foundation, Geneva, Zonta International, Women for Peace, France, Women for Peace, Switzerland, the World Federation of Methodist Women, Switzerland Physicians for Social Responsibility, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the International Council of Jewish Women, the International Peace Bureau - War Resisters' International, the Quaker United Nations Office, the International Baccalaureat Organization and the Inter-African Committee.

(Mr. Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

Mr. President, could I join you in extending my very best wishes to all women present here in this room today?

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for having read out the message of the NGO community on the occasion of International Women's Day. Before giving the floor to the speakers inscribed today, I should like to ask whether any delegation wishes to take the floor at this stage in connection with the message we have just heard. The distinguished Ambassador of Belgium, Baron Guillaume, has the floor.

Baron GUILLAUME (Belgium) (translated from French): Mr. President, allow me on behalf of my country, and as representative of the Western Group, to thank the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for showing their interest in the Conference on Disarmament by coming once again this year to deliver a message to us on the occasion of International Women's Day. We are particularly appreciative as negotiators of disarmament treaties, because we know that whereas wars are almost always caused by men, the vast majority of victims are women and children. It is with this in mind that we are now working hard to negotiate the CTBT, and that we have resolved to complete our work in this field next June. If we manage to meet that deadline, we will be able to be proud to have contributed to responding to one of the major concerns of women throughout the world. To achieve this we need the encouragement of one and all and the support which we find through the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is welcome.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Guillaume, for his statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary, Mr. Zimonyi.

Mr. ZIMONYI (Hungary): The Hungarian delegation has the honour to welcome, on behalf of the Eastern European regional group in the Conference on Disarmament, the message from non-governmental organizations. We thank them for their interest and support they have given to our work. We have noted with special interest the points made about the ongoing efforts in this body to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. On behalf of the Eastern European Group, the Hungarian delegation would like to convey to the representatives of the Women's international organizations, as well as all women heads and members of delegations, secretariat staff and interpreters, our heartfelt congratulations on the eve of International Women's Day.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Hungary for his statement, and I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria, Ambassador Meghlaoui.

Mr. MEGHLAOUI (Algeria) (translated from French): On behalf of my country, Algeria, and the Group of 21, which I have the honour of coordinating, I wish first of all, through you, Mr. President, to welcome the representatives of the NGO community who are here with us today on the eve of International Women's Day. I warmly welcome the message that has been

delivered to us on this occasion, a message of peace and an appeal to contribute to bringing about an ever more peaceful and safer world. Through this message hopes and fears are expressed. We must make every effort to fulfil these hopes and dispel the fears. We can do this, first, by finalizing the CTBT this year, next by structuring our agenda for balanced and rational treatment of our future work, and lastly, more generally, by harnessing our work to an irreversible multilateral disarmament process which seems to be possible as a result of the present configuration of international relations.

Mr. President, ladies, I would also like to assure you, on behalf of the Group of 21, of our unshakeable attachment to all efforts aimed at general and complete disarmament. The necessary political will exists in the Group of 21 and in each delegation which identifies itself fully with the appeal addressed to us today by the NGOs. The commitment of these NGOs to the cause of peace, their determination, set an example for us all. I am convinced that this year another step will be taken towards peace. Others must follow so that human and intellectual resources are finally harnessed to development. I will conclude by wishing every success to the NGOs which have addressed this message to us today, and extending greetings to all our sisters in this room.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria for his statement and now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Sha.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): On the eve of International Women's Day, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Chinese delegation to express warm congratulations to all the women participating in the CD, including the ladies present in our gallery today and in the interpretation booths. A Chinese saying goes "Women can hold up half the sky". We are glad to see that, although the number of women participating in the CD is less than half of the people in the forum, yet they have already been playing the role of holding up half the sky in the negotiations. And sometimes and on some issues they even play a larger role than holding up half the sky. Last year, the Fourth International Women's Conference was successfully held in China. The Conference adopted the Beijing Declaration. It made an important contribution towards the advancement of the role and the position of women, including in the field of disarmament. We hope that the ladies working in the CD will, as always, cooperate with the menfolk here so as to jointly promote the noble cause of international disarmament.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement. Is there any other delegation wishing to take the floor? If that is not the case, I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya, Ambassador Esther Tolle.

Ms. Tolle (Kenya): First of all, let me convey my delegation's congratulations and sincere gratitude for the very impressive message of commitment that has been conveyed to us by the International Women's Federation and which was read out by the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. President, as this is the first time that I intervene in the plenary of the Conference on Disarmament, allow me to extend my delegation's sincere

congratulations for the skilful manner in which you have steered our work in the past weeks in your dual role as President of the Conference and Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. I would also like to extend my delegation's appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador U Aye of Myanmar, for the effective manner in which he guided our work, thereby enabling the smooth commencement of our 1996 session, and also to Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and personal representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, for the invaluable services they render to the Conference. Allow me also to thank all my colleagues who have welcomed me to the Conference on Disarmament. I have been closely following the work of the CD and look forward to working closely with other colleagues to achieve the aims of this august body.

The Conference on Disarmament has reached a critical phase in its work in the quest for the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. The past two years have resulted in commendable progress. As we approach the final hurdle, the task ahead of us is indeed challenging. Mindful of United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/65, that was adopted unanimously at the General Assembly's last session, which called for completion of the final text as soon as possible within this year, it is imperative that the Conference strives diligently in order to arrive at a consensus on all outstanding issues. To this end, I wish to assure you and Ambassadors Berdennikov and Zahran, Chairmen of Working Groups 1 and 2 respectively, of my delegation's continued support.

My delegation is appreciative of the effort and dedication of the delegations of Iran and Australia who presented treaty texts which I am confident will prove to be useful for the negotiating process. Both texts are currently under consideration by my delegation. The time is propitious for increased momentum and exercise of political will to ensure that a truly comprehensive test ban be attained within the deadline.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Kenya for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Caballero.

Mr. CABALLERO (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, as I am addressing the plenary of the Conference on Disarmament officially for the first time, allow me to express my congratulations to you at seeing you in the Chair of what in my view as a newcomer is a forum of great prestige on account of the responsible way in which it deals with the tasks entrusted to it as the sole multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament. I am sure that this Conference will benefit a great deal from your experience and your recognized skill as a diplomat. You may count on the reliable support of my delegation. Allow me also to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Aye of Myanmar, who excelled in discharging his functions. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all those who very kindly extended a welcome to me.

In my country, 8 March is celebrated as a popular holiday. On that day our entire people pays tribute to mothers, wives, daughters, women workers,

for their enormous contribution to political, economic and social life and the efforts of our people. My delegation wishes to take the opportunity offered by a day like today, on the eve of that holiday, to express in addition its congratulations to the women colleagues who honourably represent their countries in this Conference, as well as to the women representatives of the NGOs who are with us today, and to all the female conference servicing staff.

For those present and in general for those who follow the evolution of the work in the Conference on Disarmament, there is the conviction that we are at a crucial moment of definitions, not only of principles and specific concepts related to the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty that we are negotiating, but also of what our aspirations are as an international community, this being understood as the concatenation of the interests of all the States that make it up. Such a concatenation and interaction presupposes that the views of some will not preponderate over the views of others, but that there should be a harmonious reflection of the essence of the respective national interests. To realize these aspirations, the decisive factor is the flexibility that we demonstrate in carrying out the tasks entrusted to us and the recognition that this is the very time and place for each of us, in a sovereign manner, to be capable of identifying the common ground on which we will find a solution to our differences. This is the spirit that should prevail in our work if we truly wish to take another step towards disarmament.

Of course, the foregoing has a great deal to do with perceptions concerning what is best for each country and for the international community as a whole. That which for some might perhaps constitute an extraordinary contribution, for others who maintain different military and security doctrines, different ideas of what disarmament is per se, might be one more step of limited practical significance. We should have a clear awareness that each State, regardless of its military doctrine, size, political or economic system or approach to disarmament, has national interests and the right to defend them on an equal footing in any negotiations that are held.

The comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, a matter which has been before us for some time, will contain such principles of international law, in so far as it is a universal and multilateral instrument that can be effectively verified; contributes effectively to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects; to the process of nuclear disarmament and, consequently, to the fostering of international peace and security. If this, the mandate that was given to us some time ago, is not faithfully carried out, it cannot be considered that we are being consistent with the flexibility and spirit of compromise that we are advocating. How can we carry out this mandate? How can we have a homogeneous interpretation of what it means? In our view, very simply: by laying down clearly that the CTBT should constitute a step in the process towards nuclear disarmament. This step would be followed by concrete measures to proceed, in a given time-frame, to the attainment of the nuclear-weapon-free world which we once lived in.

Listening carefully to the various statements that are made in plenary, it would appear at times that there is agreement with regard to the objective that should be pursued by this treaty, in the sense that it is said that it

should be a "comprehensive test-ban treaty". The word "comprehensive" means total and total is, in this case, a complete halt to nuclear tests by all States, in all environments and for ever. This would mean that it would be impossible to carry out any type of experiment that could lead to the subsequent qualitative development of nuclear weapons; that is to say, a ban on carrying out subcritical experiments or any other tests whose results might be doubtful or not verifiable. Giving shape to these objectives in the treaty would respond not only to the wishes of the international community but would have a very beneficial effect on the way in which the non-nuclear-weapon States see the nuclear Powers' relationship with their stockpiles. The foregoing would also be consistent with the thinking of the members of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (to which Cuba is not a party), which, on account of the importance that they attach to this instrument, decided to extend it indefinitely. However, it is clear to us that they are not happy that this extension should be only the legitimization for ever of the nuclear-weapon monopoly of five countries. We know that they demand more, that they demand the application of article VI of the Treaty by the nuclear Powers and the programme of action on nuclear disarmament included in the Principles and Objectives adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

It would also be consistent with the declaration made by the heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement in Cartagena de Indias, which, although it is true it has no significance for some non-member countries, it is also true that the majority of the international community, gathered together in that Movement, has long been advocating that the main priority - nuclear disarmament - should be placed on the negotiating table, as occurred with chemical and biological weapons. Cuba feels deeply and seriously committed to the Final Declaration of Cartagena and endorses each and every one of the principles set out in it. As a reaffirmation of what has been stated, we subscribe to the statement made by the Group of 21 in the plenary of the Conference on 23 January.

None of this is new in this room. Therefore we request that an ad hoc committee should be established as soon as possible to negotiate a concrete programme of nuclear disarmament to be carried out in a specific time-frame. There are many proposals as a basis for this that could be consolidated and constitute a platform which would enable us to take the first steps. It is argued that the task of nuclear disarmament is the prerogative of the nuclear-weapon Powers. How can one deny the interest and the right of the entire international community to participate in a process that is designed to eradicate the danger and threat to all peoples that is posed by the existence of weapons which could obliterate life from the face of our planet? What do they fear, the States which do not want to negotiate nuclear disarmament? Who are the enemies, now that the East-West conflict has disappeared? Why are the same military doctrines maintained? Perhaps it is planned to resolve the serious problems facing the international community today with nuclear weapons? Is it not known in this room that every day in Africa, Asia and Latin America large numbers of children are dying for lack of medicines and basic foodstuffs that could be provided using a minute part of what is currently being spent on military equipment by some countries? Let us think about this and let us dedicate the colossal resources that are now being funnelled to the arms race to more noble ends.

(Mr. Caballero, Cuba)

Taking up again this subject of negotiations on the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, we also wish to express our views on certain highly sensitive aspects for which urgent solutions are required. This is the case for scope. This article is basic and it will set forth what will be the essence of the treaty. We think that, whatever the wording may be - because we are flexible on this - it is here that the prohibition of all tests that could entail the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons or the creation of new generations of such weapons should take shape. Among the ideas that have been put forward against this approach is that of the inability of the system to detect or verify given types of tests. We are not trying to verify what is impossible. However, this is a political instrument that can not limit its ambitions to what is technically possible as that would mean erring on the side of excessive pragmatism. There are moral obligations which exist and have always existed and would be highly relevant on this occasion when we cannot have the ideal verification system.

As the seat of the organization we have already expressed our support for the city of Vienna, as well as the contractual relations that the organization should have with the International Atomic Energy Agency. However, we welcome all the other facilities that that city could offer to improve the living and working conditions of the organization and the officials who will be connected with it.

The verification system must be cost-effective. The States parties must defray the costs of the activities of the organization, including verification, in keeping with the United Nations scale of contributions, adjusted to take account of the difference in the membership of the United Nations and the comprehensive-nuclear-test-ban treaty organization. An improved mechanism based on the four technologies that have been put forward should provide a sound basis for subsequent technical evaluation of the nature of the phenomena that are detected. The introduction of national technical means could jeopardize the universal character of the treaty since, as is well known, only some countries have the advanced technical means that the CTBT will require and these means are under exclusive national control. Moreover, by using information other than that provided by the international monitoring system we would be legitimizing the use of information from national intelligence sources. Therefore we think that verification should be based solely on the data obtained through the international monitoring system.

On-site inspections will be a rare occurrence and will be accompanied by a process of consultation and clarification of doubts with regard to any event that might prompt suspicion about a possible failure to comply with the treaty. In any event their functions must always be compatible with the activity that is the object of the ban, and - this is extremely important - must avoid any type of possibility of being used as a political instrument against other States.

The Executive Council is very important, as regards both its membership and its functions, in guaranteeing the effective functioning of the treaty. We seek a balanced council with functions that would not imply discrimination for any of the States parties. In its membership no State member of the organization should be excluded, nor should there be the possibility of a

(Mr. Caballero, Cuba)

veto. We do not think either that there should be permanent seats by virtue of any criterion, namely, a nuclear capability, financial contribution to the organization or the number of international monitoring system stations on a country's territory. The only criteria that we accept for belonging to the Executive Council are being a member of the organization and performing the obligations entered into under the treaty. The number of members and the regional breakdown is a useful criterion that we are prepared to analyse on the basis of existing experience.

The Conference of States Parties will be the most representative organ of the organization, and it will have to take decisions with regard to a situation of particular gravity. We do not think that the authority of this body should be undermined in order to submit a given situation for a decision to the United Nations Security Council, whose members include the five nuclear-weapon States themselves, which, moreover, are those that have the greatest capabilities for carrying out a nuclear test. What measure would be taken if one of them were to violate the basic provisions of the treaty and its case were brought before the Security Council? The answer is clear: nothing. With no more than the veto of the country concerned, all the efforts, recommendations and concerns of all the States parties would be dashed. The subject, in the particular case of this treaty, should be analysed very carefully and in a pragmatic way. We cannot make 180° turns which at the end of the road will put us exactly where we started without any results whatsoever, but after having spent considerable energy and resources.

In the most recent plenaries we have witnessed the efforts made by two delegations in order to find solutions to the difficulties in the text that we are using as a basis. My delegation wishes to welcome these efforts and assure the distinguished delegations of Iran and Australia, the leading figures in this praise, that both texts have been very useful to us, not only to reaffirm the will to make progress which drives us, but also to understand better certain aspects that, by their nature, in the present draft, lead to confusion and misunderstanding. My capital, at this moment, is studying both texts, as a result of which we cannot yet put forward any substantive opinions, except to transmit, on their behalf, appreciation for the hard work that has been done and the desire to contribute that has been displayed.

The Conference on Disarmament has an agenda that was adopted in 1978 and it features various issues on which my country would like to see progress made. However, I think that we will have time in future to express our opinions, which, indeed, have long been well known to all. Moreover, we have informed the Special Coordinator who has been appointed to hold consultations on this of our preliminary views, together with a constant willingness to contribute to the discharge of his functions. We wish to focus our efforts on the conclusion of the CTBT, as we reflected through our positive vote on the resolution recently adopted by the General Assembly, and finalize the negotiations this year. For this we made the appeal at the beginning of our statement, for flexibility, which would enable us to have, at the fifty-first session, a text that could be put to the international community for approval. A balanced text that - to use the fashionable simile in this Conference - like

a huge mirror reflects all of us, not as we would like to be, but as we are: possessed of juridical and sovereign equality, as the United Nations Charter recognizes.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Berdennikov.

Mr. BERDENNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, I am especially pleased to see you serving as President of the Conference on Disarmament. I consider that the Conference was fortunate that at such an important moment it was your turn to take up this position. We know that you are an experienced diplomat and that you have worked in the Conference for many years, on more than one posting. It is also pleasant for us that the work of the Conference is being guided by a representative of the Netherlands, a country with which Russia has had ties of sympathy and respect dating back to the times of Peter the Great. We understand what a heavy burden has been placed on your shoulders this month, when you have to guide not only the work of the NTB Committee, but also that of the Conference as a whole, and you can fully count on cooperation from the Russian delegation to do all it can to lighten your burden and to move forward under your guidance to tangible results.

I would also like to congratulate the distinguished Ambassador of Algeria, Ambassador H. Meghlaoui, on his designation to the post of Special Coordinator on the question of the future CD agenda, and the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt, Ambassador M. Zahran, on his appointment to the post of Chairman of Working Group 2 of the NTB Ad Hoc Committee, and also to thank all our colleagues who congratulated me on my appointment as Chairman of the Committee's Working Group 1. I will of course do all I can to ensure success in the work of the Group. I cannot fail to note that we greatly appreciate the effective support that the Conference enjoys from its Secretary-General, V.F. Petrovsky, his deputy, A. Bensmail, and also their colleagues in the United Nations Secretariat. Finally, I would like to address words of welcome to the Ambassadors of Cuba, Kenya and Nigeria who have recently arrived at the CD, and with whom the Russian delegation will take pleasure in cooperating.

I am also pleased to welcome the representatives of the international non-governmental organizations who are present in this room. We greatly appreciate the attention they pay to our work and we agree with many of the ideas contained in the message addressed to the Conference which was read out today. I take this opportunity to congratulate all women on International Women's Day, which is to be celebrated tomorrow.

In recent years profound changes have occurred in the international arena. At the global level, the "cold war" was overcome through combined efforts. As the President of Russia noted in his message to the Federal Assembly on 23 February 1996, there is no real military threat for Russia for the first time in the twentieth century. Today, the most powerful nuclear weapons are not targeted on Russian cities, or indeed on cities in the United States, Great Britain and other countries. Russia and the United States are carrying out unprecedentedly deep cuts in their strategic

armaments. It has been possible to consolidate strategic stability, and to ensure the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. However, we cannot but see the problems which have arisen in international politics since the end of the "cold war". I have in mind not only the accumulation of regional and local conflicts or the spread of terrorism, but also the possibility of dangerous geopolitical changes, first of all those related to the planned advance of the military structure of NATO towards Russian frontiers. We view the drawing of a new dividing line in Europe as lacking in any rational sense and it cannot be seen as anything other than dangerous provocation directed against Russia's security interests, a recrudescence of thinking in "cold war" terms. There is broad political consensus on this subject in our country. The plans for expanding NATO are poisoning the whole international climate, and arms control is no exception here. Moreover, we cannot avoid being disturbed at the fact that in the United States voices are being raised with respect to denunciation of the ABM Treaty and the creation of an ABM system on the territory of the country despite the prohibition in the Treaty. If that were to happen, this would have extremely negative consequences for the disarmament process. The maintenance of strategic stability in the world might be called into question, and this we feel is inadmissible for the national security of all States without exception.

Russia attaches great importance to the adoption in May 1995 of the historic decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons without any conditions whatsoever. Our position is clear and definite: the indefinite extension of the NPT is not some sort of licence for the perpetual ownership of nuclear weapons for anyone at all. The President of Russia, speaking at the forty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, put forward a proposal for the beginning of negotiations among the five nuclear Powers with the aim of drawing up a treaty on nuclear security and strategic stability, which would make it possible to deal comprehensively with the problems in this area, including those related to the further elimination of nuclear munitions and a reduction of their delivery vehicles.

The Russian delegation is in favour of the problem of nuclear disarmament being included also on the Conference on Disarmament's agenda as a separate item, from which it is high time to remove the reference to the task of cessation of the nuclear arms race as an already accomplished task. There is a need for joint efforts to devise proposals on the contribution which the CD might make to resolving this global problem. As for the organizational framework for such work, here we are ready to show flexibility.

Russia has been consistently in favour of the full and comprehensive prohibition of nuclear tests, considering that the time has come to take this important step towards preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their qualitative development. This position was set down by the President of Russia in the United Nations back in 1992. Since the proclamation of its independence, Russia has not conducted a single nuclear explosion, and has firmly adhered to the moratorium it proclaimed. To a great extent thanks to our persistent efforts, it finally became possible in 1994 to get down to practical negotiations to draw up a treaty on this matter. From the very

beginning of the negotiations, Russia made an official proposal to extend the prohibition contained in the 1963 Moscow Treaty on any nuclear-weapon test explosions and any other nuclear explosions to the underground medium as well, thus making the ban on nuclear tests general and complete. And here we have always considered and continue to consider that the treaty being drawn up must be universal and have no time-limit, must be non-discriminatory and must not contain any threshold limitations. Unfortunately, this position did not immediately enjoy support from the other parties to the negotiations. However, little by little, thanks to well-directed work, the positions on these key issues in the treaty were successfully brought closer together. As a result, there are now solid grounds for the completion of work on the CTBT before the end of 1996, which Russia has always advocated.

At the same time it is clear that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, as a powerful factor in the limitation of nuclear weapons, will not of itself lead to their complete elimination. On the road towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, much remains to be done. In this connection, we cannot but draw attention to the attempts of some participants in the CTBT negotiations to link this treaty to a certain time-frame and schedule for the reduction and ultimate elimination of nuclear arsenals. Such a linkage, given the existing political situation, can only make work on the treaty substantially more difficult.

The international monitoring system (IMS) must be an important component of the CTBT. To date, an enormous amount of work has been accomplished on the treaty, at both the expert and the political levels. The results of this work are encouraging. We are close to a decision which will lead to the creation of an effective, economical and non-discriminatory IMS. To a great extent, this is a result of compromises which have been found on many IMS elements. Russia has made its own contribution to achieving these compromises. However, any possibilities for compromise have their limits. For Russia, one such limit is the question of ensuring equal terms for monitoring existing nuclear test sites, their identical transparency for the IMS. As we stated at the very beginning of negotiations in the CD plenary on 1 February 1994, "of course, the non-discrimination principle should also apply to the verification machinery that will be provided for in the treaty". In this connection, the Russian delegation is firmly in favour of ensuring equal conditions for monitoring the existing nuclear test sites by improving the seismological and radionuclide subsystems of the IMS. If the Russian proposal is adopted, then the problem of equal transparency at test sites can be rapidly resolved. However, I would like to underscore very clearly that we can and must resolve this issue in the context of the IMS itself, and not using so-called confidence-building measures, including the exchange of data which might be provided by national stations on a voluntary basis.

The Russian delegation is satisfied at the results of the work which has been carried out recently on the international data centre (IDC). We see the IDC as one of the vital elements in the international monitoring system for the CTBT. We feel that the products and services of the IDC should not only meet the needs of the CTBT organization but, to no lesser an extent, should be in keeping with the national interests and capabilities of all States parties to the treaty. Russia's position on on-site inspection (OSI) issues is

(Mr. Berdennikov, Russian Federation)

well-known. We have noted that the basic elements of the Russian approach to OSI are shared by many other participants in the negotiations. The Russian delegation considers that OSI is an important component part of the international regime for monitoring compliance with the CTBT. At the same time OSI should be used only as an exceptional measure when all other means of clarifying the situation related to a possible violation of the CTBT have been exhausted. OSI should not be turned into a routine, frequently repeated means of clarifying just any concerns, including those which are not backed up by sufficiently convincing grounds. A series of key elements for the triggering and execution of on-site inspections contained in the Russian approach are designed to effectively prevent possible cases of abuse. We consider in particular that an OSI should be based either on data from the international monitoring system or on data from the IMS and national technical means. It will be possible to take a final position on this issue when the parameters, operational principles and effectiveness of the IMS become fully clear. However, when we speak of the possible use of national monitoring facilities, we are of course thinking about those which are used in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law. Another important element of the OSI regime which will help to avoid abuse and, at the same time, will ensure that OSIs are sufficiently effective, should be the "green light" procedure for adopting a decision to trigger an OSI. We are convinced that any automaticity in triggering an inspection, especially with the use of the so-called simplified first phase procedure, could lead to the unjustifiably frequent routine use of OSIs, in particular with respect to those countries which experience large numbers of seismic events that are unrelated to nuclear explosions.

We note with satisfaction the growth in support for the Russian proposal on the treaty provisions for entry into force of the CTBT, namely, the proviso regarding ratification by all States which possess nuclear power or nuclear research reactors as enumerated in the relevant IAEA list. We consider that this formula will make it possible to guarantee the legitimate security interests of all States both globally and regionally, and it corresponds to the purposes which we have set ourselves in the treaty from the very outset, namely, promoting the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and putting an end to their qualitative development. In this context, we are not refusing to consider other proposals on how to resolve this question. However, it must be recognized that all attempts which have been made up to the present to reduce the number of instruments of ratification which will be necessary for the entry into force of the treaty as compared with what we have proposed, have proved not to be viable.

We are not sure that the alleged problem which some people have been over-emphasizing about the treaty being held hostage to the question of the conditions of entry into force for the CTBT is not artificial. In any event, if this problem does exist, it will have to be resolved by political methods and not by including in the treaty provisions which are detrimental to its universality and effectiveness. As for the formula involving simply a set number of States needed for the treaty to enter into force, without any reference to countries or categories of country whose participation in the treaty would be mandatory, it might lead to a situation where the treaty would enter into force without States of crucial importance for its effectiveness.

(Mr. Berdennikov, Russian Federation)

This apparently attractive decision is in fact pointless, since even today there are more than 170 countries which have obligations under the NPT and certain regional agreements which forbid them to conduct nuclear tests.

Another question which is important for the effective functioning of the CTBT is the satisfactory solution of the question of the composition of the Executive Council within the future organization. This body has to be representative both from the point of view of geographical allocation of seats and from the point of view of participation in its work by key States. It seems to us that a mutually acceptable solution to this problem can be found by the de facto granting of permanent or continuous membership of the Executive Council to those States which meet certain objective criteria which would need to be agreed on. Here we feel it important to use the example of IAEA.

The delegation of Russia is in favour of a requirement of 12 months' advance notice for withdrawal from the CTBT. In our opinion, it is necessary to create conditions which would make it as difficult as possible for any country to withdraw from the CTBT, because such a withdrawal might in turn provoke a chain reaction and thus the breakdown of the treaty. A reasonable period of notice - for example - 12 months, will in our view make it possible to take the necessary measures to clarify and correct the situation which had led a State to decide to withdraw from the CTBT. If such a withdrawal does nevertheless occur, other countries will have more time in order to assess the situation which has arisen and take the necessary steps to defend their national security. Considerable time may also be needed in order to plug the gap in the IMS which might be created if stations located on the territory of a State withdrawing from the treaty are withdrawn from the system.

In conclusion I would like to return to the question of the expansion of the membership of the CD. The decision which was adopted by the Conference at the end of last year's session has unfortunately not yet brought us any closer to a settlement of this problem which is so important for the CD. Furthermore, no movement at all is visible in this direction, although it would seem clear to all that the present composition of the Conference on Disarmament no longer corresponds to the current political situation. The situation which has developed around this issue is prejudicial to the authority of the Conference in its capacity as a multilateral negotiating forum, and may adversely affect the negotiations now under way in the CD. We call upon all delegations to do all they can to arrange a way out of this difficult position as quickly as possible. We would in particular like to appeal to the American delegation once again to weigh up all the pros and cons of the special position which that delegation has adopted with regard to the expansion of the membership of the CD and finally move towards the positions of all the other countries which take part in the work of the Conference.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that we continue to believe that the question of Slovakia's agreement with the Czech Republic to occupy the place earlier occupied by Czechoslovakia is not a matter related to the expansion of the membership of the Conference, and that it should be resolved separately and without any linkages or delays. Justice should be rendered to Slovakia.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Saboia.

Mr. SABOIA (Brazil): Before I read my prepared statement, allow me to join other speakers in expressing the appreciation of the Brazilian delegation for the important message that was addressed today by a number of international NGOs on the occasion of the celebration of International Women's Day. I wish also to extend our congratulations to all the women participating in the work of the CD for their important contribution to the work of this Conference. The sentiments of the Brazilian delegation with regard to this important date have been fully expressed in the statement made by the Coordinator of the Group of 21, Ambassador Meghlaoui of Algeria.

I briefly take the floor today to announce that on 27 February 1996 the Brazilian Congress decided to approve the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC), signed 13 January 1993 in Paris. The Brazilian Government will shortly deposit the relevant instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The CWC is the first treaty in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction which is at the same time universal, comprehensive, non-discriminatory and verifiable. Brazil participated actively in its negotiation and considers it a useful model to be followed in efforts to effectively ban other classes of weapons of mass destruction, such as strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention, and engaging in negotiations - which we hope will commence soon - for the prohibition and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement. That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? I recognize the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Nasseri.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor very briefly to add my voice to the words of gratitude expressed towards the NGO community and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for their presence here today and for the very valuable and significant statement that they presented to this Conference, as read by our Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky. Indeed, the NGOs represent, in a sense, the conscience of the international community in disarmament but they have also, on a continuous basis, and I should also say in a very persuasive way, contributed to our work by making various studies in different fields of disarmament and producing publications; they are usually very deep and resourceful. In a number of areas we have been able to refer to them as a very useful source of information and analysis.

I simply wonder, then, whether it is appropriate for us to enjoy the contribution of the NGOs on very rare occasions - once a year, as has been the case. And, is it perhaps not the time to re-examine the possibility of enhancing their participation in the work of the Conference on Disarmament? Of course, this is not a new issue; it has been examined in the past, but probably we have not been able to come to a conclusion at certain stages. But the international situation continues to evolve and maybe for that reason the

(Mr. Nasseri, Brazil)

atmosphere and situation in the Conference evolves in a positive way. After all, at this stage, we are reviewing the membership of the Conference; we are reviewing the agenda; and we are even considering - at least it has been suggested that we consider - the possibility of revising the rules of procedure. Therefore, I venture to suggest to you, Mr. President, if you find it appropriate, to examine the possibility of renewing consultations on enhancing participation by the NGOs in the work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Iran for his statement and I would like to come back to his suggestion.

Are there any other delegations wishing to take the floor at this stage?

If that is not the case, I would like, briefly, to return to the suggestion that was just made by the distinguished Ambassador of Iran to reconsider the issue of participation of NGOs, closer association of NGOs, in the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The question is, indeed, under active consideration. Actually, the question came up yesterday in the weekly Presidential consultations, and has been referred to groups through their representatives. I am sure that Ambassador Nasseri will be informed through the Coordinator of his group of the results of our consultations.

If there is no other delegation wishing to speak, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that the secretariat has circulated, at my request, a tentative timetable of meetings for next week. This timetable is, as usual, merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. On this understanding, may I assume that the timetable is acceptable?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind you that, in accordance with the timetable of meetings for this week, this plenary meeting will be followed immediately by a meeting of the Friend of the Chair on On-site Inspections of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on 14 March 1996 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.